

Living BUDDHISM

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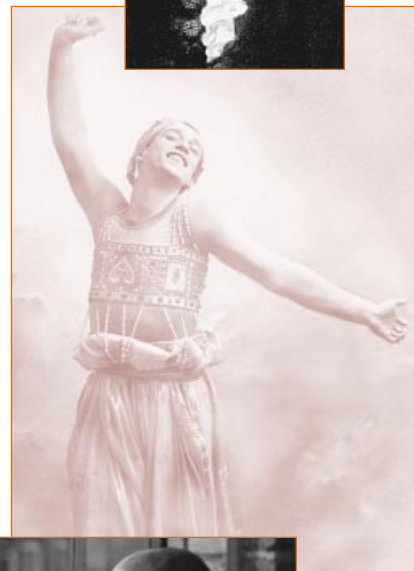
Vol. 5 • No. 8

- 4** **General Director's Message**
Providing the Spiritual Base for People of Character
- 6** **Buddhist Concept for Today's Living (28)**
Deliberately Creating the Appropriate Karma
- 8** **Living the Teachings (7)**
Making the Revolution Personal
- 10** **Declaration 2001—Toward a Nuclear-Free Age**
An Interview with Dr. David Krieger, founder of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
- 18** **A Historical Perspective of The Philosophy of Value**
Immanuel Kant and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi: Modern Civilization vs Humanistic Civilization
- 27** **My Debt To Makiguchi and His Legacy**
Stephanie Tansey Applies Makiguchi's Theory of Education to The New School of Collaborative Learning
- 31** **Record of My Life**
Speaking at the Institute de France
- 39** **Art and Spirituality in the East and the West**
SGI President Ikeda's Speech (June 1989)
- 45** **Promises To Work Toward a Renaissance in His Neighborhood**
Derek Owens, success in business is improving his community

10



18



39



45

COVER: The Institut De France, where SGI President Ikeda spoke in June 1989. (see page 31). Photo by Angelo Homak/ Corbis.

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GLOSSARY

Buddha

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

Gohonzon

The fundamental object of devotion in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. It is the embodiment of the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, expressing in graphic form the life-state of Buddhahood, which all people inherently possess. *Go* means *worthy of honor* and *honzon* means *object of fundamental respect*.

Karma

Sanskrit word meaning *action*. The life tendency or destiny each individual creates through thoughts, words and deeds that exert an often unseen influence over one’s future.

Kosen-rufu

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

Lotus Sutra

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

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo

The fundamental law expounded in

Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, it expresses the true aspect of life. Chanting it allows people to directly tap their enlightened nature. Although the deepest meaning of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is revealed only through its practice, the literal meaning is: *Nam* (devotion), the action of practicing Buddhism; *myoho* (Mystic Law), the essential law of the universe and its phenomenal manifestations; *renge* (lotus), the simultaneity of cause and effect; *kyo* (Buddha’s teaching), all phenomena.

Nichiren Daishonin (1222–82)

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

Shakyamuni

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

Ten Worlds

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

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Publisher: Fred M. Zaitzu

Assistant Publisher: Greg Martin

Editor in Chief: Ted Morino

Managing Editor: Dave Baldschun

Staff Writers: Alexis Trass, Stephanie Celano

Publications Translation Department: Jeff Kriger, Shin Yatomi

Art Director/Designer: Stephanie Sydney

Research: Erica Ogihara

WRITTEN/ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS:

Send all written, photographic or fine art submissions to Living Buddhism, 606 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401 or e-mail: LivingB1@aol.com

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Frequently Cited Sources

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

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

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

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

Providing the Spiritual Base for **PEOPLE OF CHARACTER**

Greetings to the readers of *Living Buddhism*. I hope you are taking care of yourselves during the hot summer months. Summer is a wonderful time for students taking a break from school and for families spending time together. This summer is also the summer when, throughout the SGI-USA, we are hosting our Family Youth Culture Festivals, with the theme of Victory Over Violence. I have visited many of these festivals or have seen firsthand the joyful preparations taking place.

I want to express my great delight that our youth are striving so actively for the success of these events. But at the same time, I want to express my humble appreciation to those men and women who are providing support to help them create this historical series of events. Truly, these festivals are an expression of the wonderful family we have in the SGI, and they are only successful when all of us, regardless of age or gender, collaborate together as a family.

There are many reasons why we are preparing and hosting these festivals during the summer. Not only is summer when many young people have the time to participate in this event but it's also when violent crime increases. It is most meaningful for the youth of the SGI-USA to offer an example of how to channel the energy of youth into creating something positive for our communities. All of us, as a family, are taking a stand to declare our conviction in the SGI's message of peace and humanism.

In *For the Sake of Peace*, SGI President Ikeda states: "What can nurture truthful, nonviolent and pure-hearted people? The building of lasting peace

depends on how many people capable of self-restraint can be fostered through religious practice. If a religion is worthy of the name, and if it can respond to the needs of contemporary times, it should nurture in its followers the spiritual base for becoming good citizens of the world" (p. 23).

As I look over the news headlines, I am saddened that now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we still live in a world beset by violence. In the United States, though violent crime fell in the year 2000 according to Attorney General John Ashcroft, more than 25 million people in this country were victims of violence. Internationally, peace talks between Israel and Palestine continue to face difficulties, and protests at the G8 summit have turned violent, resulting in death. But instead of being discouraged, perhaps I should say that I am even more convinced that now is the time to take a stand to change society. I am filled with a sense of mission and deep conviction that all of us need to take responsibility to create a peaceful world.

In a poem commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Youth Division, President Ikeda wrote:

*Climbing the towering peak
Of Mount Everest
Is an act of courage.
Crossing the Pacific
In a yacht
Is an act of courage.
Traveling around the globe
Is an act of courage.*

President Ikeda is talking about the courageous path of self-exploration. He is talking about the quest to “explore, discover, and understand the inner depths of our own precious life.” This means to place the supreme value of our life, and respect for the dignity of others, at the center of how we live.

*But
The journey within our own lives
Is far more courageous
And profound.
How are we to explore, discover,
And understand the inner depths
Of our own precious life,
Our most priceless possession?
This spiritual quest
Is far more important...*

*This is truly
Important;
It leads to genuine
Human security and peace.
Otherwise,
I fear
That a reversal—
Back to the war and strife
That have plagued our past—
Will begin to occur
In people’s hearts.
(World Tribune, July 20, 2001, p. 8)*

In this heartfelt and powerful poem, President Ikeda urges youth not to lead lives pursuing superficial value, but instead to strive to create the highest value. This, he says, is possible through a way of life dedicated to a noble purpose, dedicated to the strict path of self-reformation taught in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. In these stanzas, when President Ikeda is talking about the courageous path of self-exploration, he is talking about the quest to “explore, discover, and understand the inner depths of our own precious life.” This means to place the supreme value of our life, and respect for the dignity

of others, at the center of how we live.

The UNESCO Charter reads that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” This phrase aptly summarizes the core belief of our movement of nonviolence. The essence of our peace movement is “self-reformation” or “self-mastery”; it is nothing other than human revolution. This is the heart of the SGI peace movement.

In *For the Sake of Peace*, President Ikeda also says: “Peace cannot be a mere stillness, a quiet interlude between wars. It must be a vital and energetic arena of life-activity, won through volitional, proactive efforts. Peace must be a living drama—in Spinoza’s words, ‘a virtue that springs from force of character.’¹ Eternal peace is a continuum consciously maintained through the interaction of self-restraining individuals within a self-restraining society” (p. 17).

Victory Over Violence summarizes the commitment of the SGI-USA youth to end violence in our society. But it is more than a slogan. It is the spirit of the youth of America to respond to their mentor. It offers the spiritual solutions to violence that lie within Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism; it is a courageous journey to explore our own lives, and overcome the violence within.

Daniel K. Nagashima



SGI-USA General Director

1. Benedict de Spinoza, “Of the Best State of a Dominion,” *Political Treatise*, ed. R.H.M. Elwes, trans. A.H. Gosset (London: G. Bell & Son, 1883).

DELIBERATELY *Creating* the Appropriate Karma

For years, I felt confused by what I saw as a dichotomy in the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. In his writings, Nichiren Daishonin assures us that based upon our Buddhist practice, we will enjoy "peace and security" in this lifetime and "good circumstances" in our next (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 681). He also states that it is because of our countless good deeds in the remote past that we are able to take faith in the Gohonzon in this existence.

If it were true that our connection to the Mystic Law of Nam-myoho-renge kyo extends deep into the infinite past, as both the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin indicate, then why, I wondered, were so many of my fellow SGI members struggling with such extreme difficulties and problems? Where was all this good fortune we had supposedly accumulated?

The "Teacher of the Law" chapter of the Lotus Sutra offers a profound explanation: "Medicine King... you should understand that such persons have already offered alms to a hundred thousand million Buddhas and in the place of the Buddhas have fulfilled their great vow, and because they take pity on living beings they have been born in this human world ... Medicine King, you should understand that these persons voluntarily relinquish the reward due them from their pure deeds and, in the time after I have passed into extinction, because they pity living beings, they are born in this evil world so they can broadly expound this sutra" (*The Lotus Sutra*, trans. Burton Watson, pp. 161–62).

In his *Annotations on "The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra,"* the Chinese Buddhist scholar Miaolo used the phrase "deliberately creating the appro-

priate karma," (WND, 243) to describe this concept.

In "The Opening of the Eyes," Nichiren Daishonin also addresses this concept: "The more government authorities rage against me, the greater my joy. For instance, there are certain Hinayana bodhisattvas not yet freed from delusion, who draw evil karma to themselves by their own compassionate vow. If they see their father and mother have fallen into hell and are suffering greatly, they will deliberately create the appropriate karma in hopes that they too may fall into hell and share in and take their suffering upon themselves. Thus suffering is a joy to them" (WND, 243).

When SGI President Ikeda visited Sonia Gandhi in India after the assassination of her husband, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, he told her "I really hope that you can change your sad destiny into a cause for realizing an important mission in India." This conversation is captured in the book *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 2 (p. 184). Here he also explains that the greatness of Rajiv Gandhi arose from his love for the people of India.

He writes: "Not even the terrorist bombing that took his life (in May 1991) could have destroyed the love for the people that burned in Rajiv Gandhi's heart. I believe people have a mission to fulfill that transcends life and death. The lives of people who embrace a mission to which they can wholeheartedly dedicate themselves and even be willing to die for are the most sublime" (Ibid., p. 184).

The most important thing to remember as practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism — especially when facing difficulties and problems — is that we possess a profound mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth. Instead of simply viewing our unfortunate circumstances as "bad karma," our

struggles, no matter how difficult, are in fact the soil for our great mission to take root.

“To simply view your sufferings as ‘karma’ is backward-looking,” writes President Ikeda in *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra* (pp. 208–209). “We should have the attitude: ‘These are sufferings I took on for the sake of my mission. I vowed to overcome these problems through faith.’”

“When we understand this principle of ‘deliberately creating the appropriate karma,’” he continues, “our frame of mind is transformed; what we had previously viewed as destiny, we come to see as mission. There is absolutely no way we cannot overcome sufferings that are the result of a vow that we ourselves made.”

The problem is that if we are deluded in our view of life and are overcome with complaint and suffering as a result of our problems, we might forget our original vow to save others by overcoming our suffering. And then we might not be able to conquer our own suffering either.

In *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda tells the SGI members in Brazil, many of whom were desperately poor and isolated in a new and vastly different country, that in addition to making tenacious efforts, their “daimoku must also be a pledge.”

“Prayer in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism means to chant daimoku based on a pledge or vow. At its very core, this vow is to attain kosen-rufu.

“You may think you have just happened to come to Brazil as a result of your respective circumstances. But this is not the case,” he continues. “You have been born as Bodhisattvas of the Earth in order to achieve kosen-rufu in Brazil, to lead the people of this country to happiness and to create an eternal paradise in this land. Indeed, you have been chosen by Nichiren Daishonin to be here” (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 251).

It is the same for us, irrespective of where we live or our present circumstances. Once we determine to overcome our sufferings as a way to help others understand the greatness of this Buddhism and thereby lead as many people to happiness as possible, then we will be fulfilling the compassionate vows that we ourselves made in the infinite past. To make this kind of determination and advance with courage is what is most important.

“When you realize your great mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth and dedicate your lives to kosen-rufu, the sun that has existed within you since time without beginning will begin to shine forth. All offenses you have committed in past lifetimes will vanish like mist, and you will embark upon wonderful lives permeated by deep joy and happiness” (Ibid., p. 254). ☸

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

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Making the Revolution Personal

BY FRED ZAITSU, PUBLISHER

Endless deserts, endless green fields and endless mountains — it was overwhelming as I flew across America for the first time in 1971. What a huge country! I had been sent by the *Seikyo Shimbun* to cover the Seattle Convention of the SGI-USA (NSA). After the event, I flew across the country: Las Vegas, Denver, St. Louis, Chicago, Boston, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and Honolulu. For a month and a half, I went to discussion meetings, talked with fellow Buddhists, and witnessed what was happening in American society.

The upheaval of the '60s was still very apparent in 1971 — the anti-war movement, the civil rights movement, marches, demonstrations and street violence. The air itself seemed charged. TV carried outrageous images of the war in Vietnam and war-like images of outrage on the streets and college campuses of America. Everything was being propelled by youth — especially the hippies and radicals who came out of the '60s.

That generation's fight against injustice shook the country and the world. Young people were seeking answers and not finding them in the social establishment, government or religion. In each city I visited, I

When deluded, one is called an ordinary being, but when enlightened, one is called a Buddha. This is similar to a tarnished mirror that will shine like a jewel when polished. A mind now clouded by the illusions of the innate darkness of life is like a tarnished mirror, but when polished, it is sure to become like a clear mirror, reflecting the essential nature of phenomena and the true aspect of reality.
(“On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 4)

talked with young people who had found Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Most considered themselves part of the revolution taking place in society before they began practicing Buddhism. But as they polished the mirror of their lives, they went from complaining about society to taking responsibility for it.

In Denver, I talked to a group of eight or nine young people who had dropped out of society and were living in the mountains. Typical of the times, drugs had been part of their experience of dropping out and turning on. But what appealed to both activist and drop-out alike was the concept of bringing about social change through the inner transformation called human revolution. There was political and social revolution all around them, but Buddhism taught that true and lasting change could only be accomplished by changing the lives of the people. Thus these youth realized the importance of spreading Buddhism.

The idea of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo for world peace was exciting to them, and they channeled their revolutionary zeal into activities for kosen-rufu. Because they felt the world was in such bad shape, there was a real sense of urgency that kosen-rufu had to be accomplished soon. Meetings, parades and conventions were full of the amazing

energy of youth. Almost all leadership positions were held by youth with the support of the Japanese pioneers. It was a time of practically running through the streets declaring the greatness of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to everyone.

A young woman from Denver said that her mother had begun practicing first. Just prior to beginning her own practice, she had responded to a questionnaire at her school. One of the questions was “What would you do if you were president of the United States?” She had answered that she would abolish war and create a peaceful society. When she related this to her mother, her mother said, “That’s exactly what SGI President Ikeda is doing!” This led her to begin practicing herself.

Leaders that young people looked up to — for example, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. — had been assassinated. Other leaders were seen as corrupt or hypocritical. In Daisaku Ikeda, they found someone they could trust.

President Ikeda has great expectations for America. In his poem “The Sun of ‘Jiyu’ Over a New Land” he wrote:

*My treasured friends,
there is no question that
your multiracial nation, America,
represents humanity’s future.
Your land holds secret stores
of unbounded possibility, transforming
the energy of different cultures
into the unity of construction,
the flames of conflict
into the light of solidarity,
the eroding rivulets of mistrust
into a great broad flow of confidence.
On what can we ground
our efforts to open
the horizons of such a renaissance?
It is for just this reason,
my precious, treasured friends,
that you must develop within yourselves
the life-condition of Jiyu —
Bodhisattva of the Earth.
(Songs for America, pp. 37–38)*



The youth of the ‘60s and ‘70s were not finding solutions to society’s problems in the establishment. For those who encountered Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, the answer was clear — human revolution.

Thirty years have passed. I sometimes run across some of these same people with whom I spoke in 1971. Many are now leaders in society and the SGI-USA. They have changed and so has our organization. Today, our youth talk with pride of their involvement in their communities through programs such as Victory Over Violence, the “Treasuring the Future: Children’s Rights and Realities” exhibition, or the opening of Soka University’s new campus in Aliso Viejo, California.

No matter the age, President Ikeda’s message remains the same. Writing to our current SGI-USA Family Youth Festivals, he asks: “What will end people’s suffering? The fundamental solution lies not in politics, economics, government, the media or in the law alone. Only through seeking an inner transformation for each person, based on the ideal of respect for individual life, can we achieve a fundamental transformation of our society” (*World Tribune*, July 20, 2001, p. 1).

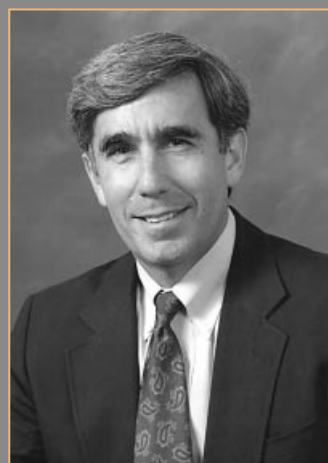
Our mission today to propagate the Law remains unchanged, but we are reaching out through a variety of avenues to touch as many lives as possible for the sake of peace. The SGI-USA youth of today are the revolutionaries of today, and they are making it personal, which will lead our society and world through a remarkable change. ☸

DECLARATION 2001 TOWARD A NUCLEAR-FREE AGE

Dr. David Krieger is the president and founding member of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, established in 1982 and based in Santa Barbara, California. The NAPF promotes and supports new ways of thinking and acting that increase the possibilities for peace. They offer research information, educational programs and policy-making guidance on the issues of peace and global survival. You can get more information on the foundation by visiting their website at www.wagingpeace.org.

In March 2000, the NAPF presented SGI President Daisaku Ikeda with its 1999 World Citizenship Award. Several days later, the Soka Gakkai Hiroshima Peace Award was presented to Dr. Krieger for his efforts in spreading the seeds of peace throughout the world.

He was interviewed for *Living Buddhism* by Debbie Belardino, who has been a member of the SGI for fourteen years. She began her practice in Santa Barbara, California. She currently lives in Japan and works as a freelance writer; she has written articles on Japanese arts and culture for *The Japan Times* and other magazines and newspapers in Japan, the United States, Hong Kong and Canada.



Dr. David Krieger

“We are standing at a nuclear crossroads. More than ten years have passed since the end of the Cold War, and yet there have been no dramatic changes in the security policies of the nuclear weapons states. These countries are continuing to rely upon their nuclear weapons to provide for their security.

They still rely upon the theory of nuclear deterrence, a theory with many problems. On the other hand, opposition to nuclear arms is growing throughout the world. If the nuclear weapons states persist in holding on indefinitely to the

status quo, we will continue to face total annihilation from nuclear weapons. Therefore, Josei Toda’s ‘Declaration for the Prohibition of Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs’ remains of the utmost importance. I am reassured that SGI President Ikeda is making strong efforts for the SGI youth to inherit the thought and passion of Josei Toda for the abolition of nuclear weapons.”

— Dr. David Krieger, from *Choose Hope*, a soon-to-be published dialogue between SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

A DECLARATION FOR THE AGES

BY DEBBIE BELARDINO

Josei Toda's speech, "Declaration for the Prohibition of Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs," is said to be the Soka Gakkai's "eternal starting point for world peace," and the basis of the SGI's worldwide efforts for peace. Given about a year before his death, it remains relevant today.

On September 8, 1957, 50,000 youth gathered at Mitsuzawa Stadium in Yokohama for a sports festival. Typhoon No. 10 had been making its way from eastern Japan and heavy storms and rain were forecast for that day. Yet September 8 shone bright and clear. "There wasn't a cloud in the sky," says Kayoko Tatenuma, who was eighteen at the time, "although it had been raining cats and dogs the day before."

Mr. Toda stated: "Today's 'Festival of Youth' has been blessed with clear, sunny skies free of any trace of yesterday's storm, as if the heavens themselves have responded to your enthusiasm. With a profound sense of joy, I watched the competitors among you give full play to the Soka Gakkai spirit in each event, as the rest of you wholeheartedly applauded their efforts."

"President Toda was full of life," says Ms. Tatenuma. "His attitude toward nuclear weapons testing and toward the atomic and hydrogen bomb deeply affected us."

"We, the citizens of the world, have an inviolable right to live. Anyone who tries to jeopardize this right is a devil incarnate, a Satan, a monster. I propose that humankind apply, in every case, the death penalty to anyone responsible for using nuclear weapons, even if that person is on the winning side" (*Seikyo Times*, May 1993, p. 60).

Using words such as devil and monster, President Toda depicts those who use nuclear weapons as something inhuman, something that

does not belong in "this society of human beings."

"I believe that it is the mission of every

member of the youth division in Japan to disseminate this idea throughout the globe" (p. 62).

An editorial from the September 8, 1998, issue of the Soka Gakkai's newspaper, *Seikyo Shimbun*, titled, "The Road to the Total Extinction of Nuclear Weapons," states: "It is said that the reason why we don't make progress in the reduction of nuclear weapons is that the theory of nuclear deterrence justifies the holding of nuclear weapons from the premise of the fear of human beings. It is disgraceful egoism itself that one tries to rule another by fear of destruction with each other. President Toda saw through this point to its essence, 'as the life of the devil nature that lies in human beings.' It is only through the power of the Buddha nature that one can overcome the power of the devil nature."

In other words, deep within us are the claws of the devil nature. We expose these hidden claws by justifying the use of nuclear weapons — valuing something other than life itself. President Toda's wish was to eradicate these claws of the devil nature by deeply instilling in the minds of the people around the world the idea that nothing is more important than life.

In the twentieth century, the human race attempted all kinds of revolutions, but never a human revolution. This is a basic concept but it has never been done. At the core of human revolution are our rights as human beings to live, meaning that no value can be created based on the killing of human beings. Until now, other revolutions have been based on thought systems other than the idea that nothing is more important than life.

Wars have been justified in "the name of something," or "for the sake of something," for example "in the name of religion," "in the name of ethnic cleansing," "for the sake of national defense" or "for the sake of national security." President Toda's declaration slashed through such rhetoric to the fundamental level of life. He insisted that we should first



Bettmann/CORBIS

Over the years, youth have proven to be an impetus for change in society. The same is true for the goal of the disarmament of nuclear weapons. Youth peace demonstrators protest the Vietnam War outside the Pentagon in Washington, DC.

think about the profits of human beings before the profits of nations. During World War II, the Japanese military enforced the policy that the nation was more important than the lives of the people. Successive Soka Gakkai Presidents Makiguchi and Toda fought this view. Truly, the way to make the twenty-first century a “century of life” is to instill in the minds of the people around the world that nothing is more important than life itself.

President Ikeda states: “It is my conviction that we must make the twenty-first century a Century of Life. Humankind must focus its attention on the ultimate frontier, that of life itself. We must learn to pull from the depths of our beings that awesome spiritual strength that is greater even than the power of nuclear weapons” (*World Tribune*, October 15, 1999, p. 4).

How can we, as SGI members, meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and of the nuclear age, where nuclear weapons loom ever deadly on the horizon? To inherit the spirit of Josei Toda, and not begrudge our lives in the fight against nuclear weapons. Indeed, this is the challenge of the twenty-first century, and the very mission of the SGI.

An interview with Dr. David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation follows.

Living Buddhism: What would you say is the essential spirit of Josei Toda’s declaration?

Dr. David Krieger: I think the essential spirit of President Toda’s declaration was passion and hope. His passion was rooted in anger for those who would threaten to use instruments as evil as nuclear weapons — weapons capable of destroying whole cities, perhaps destroying even humanity itself. His hope was in the youth. His last great request of the youth was to stand up to the evil of nuclear weapons, and rid the world of these terrible instruments of annihilation. He didn’t turn to the adults to do

this; he turned to the youth. Today, we live in societies that lack passion, even passion to confront evil. I believe that Mr. Toda was right to approach the evil of nuclear arms with passion, and also right to call upon youth to rise up and express their own passion to confront this terrible danger to humanity.

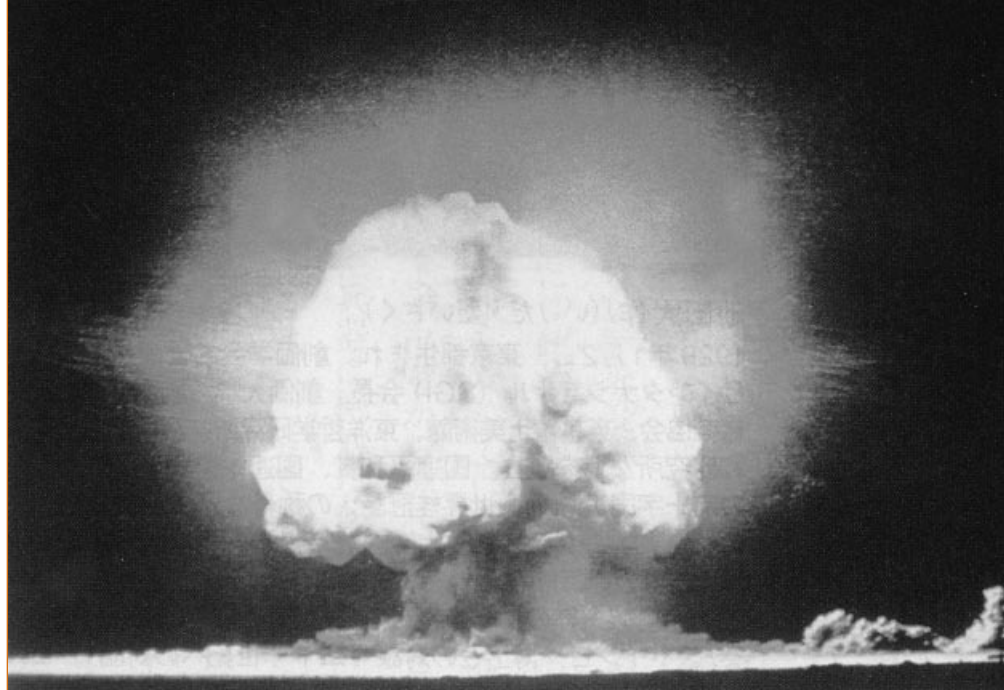
LB: Up until now, the SGI and NAPF have shared a “partnership in peace” toward the goal of the abolition of nuclear weapons. In what ways do you think we can further strengthen our partnership in the twenty-first century, especially with respect to the role that youth will play?

Krieger: Last fall, when I spoke at the local SGI branch in Santa Barbara, California, I suggested that we need to work together for a movement in the United States that is as strong as the movement in Japan for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In Japan, the youth were able to gather more than 13 million signatures for abolition in a relatively short time. Proportionate to the populations of the two countries, 13 million signatures in Japan would mean some 26 million in the United States. For many reasons, this will be a greater challenge in the United

States, but it is a challenge that we must accept. We have prepared an “Appeal to End the Nuclear Weapons Threat to Humanity.” It has been signed by some of the world’s great peace leaders, including thirty-seven Nobel Laureates of whom fourteen are Nobel Peace Laureates and SGI President Ikeda is one of the signers. My proposal is that we form a “partnership of peace” to gather 26 million signatures on this appeal in the United States in order to convince the government to become a leader in the global effort to eliminate nuclear weapons. Of course, I would see youth playing a leading role in making this happen.

LB: In *Choose Hope*, you discuss the problem of violence in high schools and remark that “the NAPF, based upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has commenced preparation for an obligatory curriculum concerning human rights for use in high schools.” Could you please comment on this in more detail?

Krieger: We have prepared a curriculum on human rights and responsibilities based upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Of course, we cannot make the curriculum obligatory, but I would like it to be. Most young people, and older people as well, do not even know the Universal Declaration exists. Everyone in the world needs to know about this important document containing basic rights for all members of the human family — and particularly young people need to know that they have certain rights just by virtue of being born. It is not enough, though, to have rights. For those rights to be effective, we must also share responsibilities. Rights can only exist when there are strong responsibilities to assure those rights. I believe that high school students should have the opportunity to study the Universal Declaration, and learn the full extent of



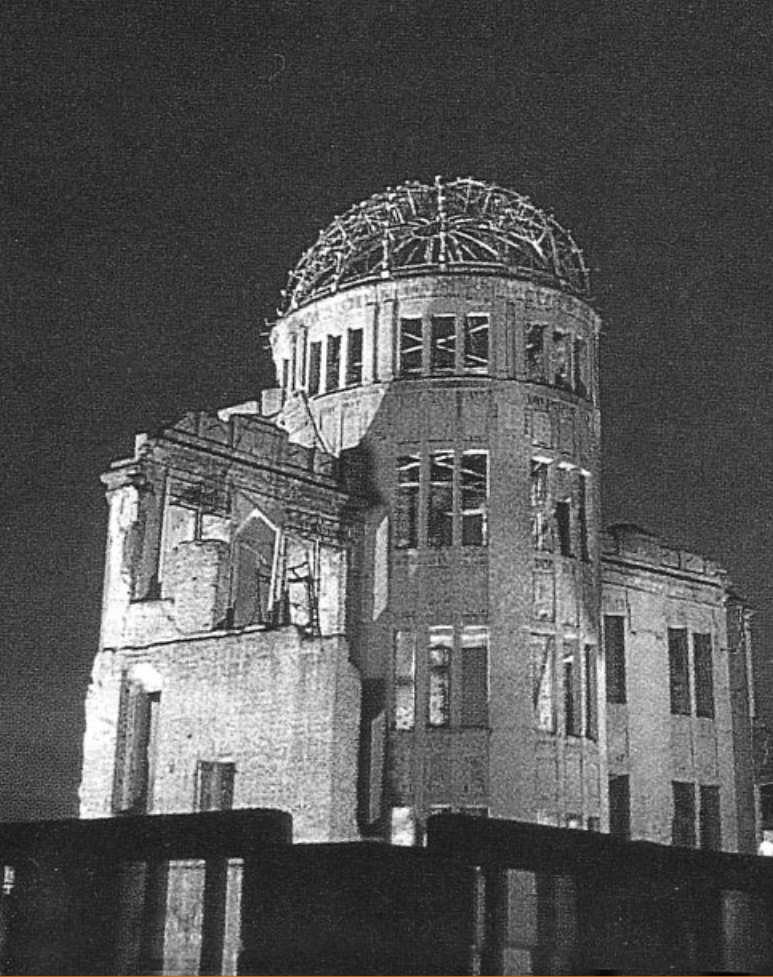
The first successful testing of a nuclear bomb in the desert at Alamo, July 7, 1945.

The Third
Civilization
magazine

their rights and responsibilities.

LB: In “Waging Peace II,” you discuss the idea of “Earth Citizenship,” and state, “as Earth Citizens we have both rights and responsibilities...our most basic responsibility is to do our part to assure the survival of life on our planet and to be a positive link between the past and future,” and state that it will be necessary to do different things, such as “adopt a global perspective,” “become educated about the dangers and threats to the earth...” This is right on line with the SGI’s movement toward global citizenship. However, the average person in daily life tends to become bogged down by day-to-day concerns. What can we do in our daily lives to raise our consciousness about nuclear weapons and become global citizens?

Krieger: You are right that most people become busy in their daily lives and often do not think about the bigger picture. I believe that changing this situation requires education, both in and out of school. If we are to survive as a species, we need to adopt a global perspective and become global citizens. In the nuclear age we are still in, national borders can no longer guarantee security. All borders are permeable. No country’s borders can protect against ideas, information, pollution, disease and



Kazuma Momoji/The Third Civilization magazine

The atomic bomb dome at Hiroshima Peace Park.

DECLARATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF ATOMIC AND HYDROGEN BOMBS

From
The Human Revolution

President Ikeda writes about the event where Josei Toda made his Declaration for the Prohibition of Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs to an audience of 50,000 youth in his novel, The Human Revolution. The following excerpt is from volume 12 and first appeared in the July 1993 issue of Seikyo Times.

certainly not against missiles or even terrorists. We need to accept a simple truth: for better or worse, the world is one. Since our problems have become global, so must our solutions be global. The sooner we accept this reality, the sooner we will be able to get on with solving the world's great problems such as the threat of nuclear arms, global warming, damage to the ozone layer, poverty, starvation, disease, illiteracy and many more. I believe that we are all citizens of Earth by virtue of being born here. As Earth citizens, we have responsibilities to take care of our planet and each other. We must build systems of peace and make war an institution of the past if we are to survive. We must build down the world's nuclear arsenals with the goal of eliminating these weapons forever. The answer lies in education, education and more education. This education must come largely from groups like SGI and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, organizations committed to a better future for humanity. ☸

Standing before the microphone with calm assurance, he [Toda] began powerfully: "Today's 'Festival of Youth' has been blessed with clear, sunny skies free of any trace of yesterday's storm, as if the heavens themselves have responded to your enthusiasm. With a profound sense of joy, I watched the competitors among you give full play to the Soka Gakkai spirit in each event, as the rest of you wholeheartedly applauded their efforts.

"Nevertheless, for all the joy I feel today, it is inevitable that the Soka Gakkai will encounter persecution again. I am also fully prepared to meet any attack that comes my way personally. Having said that, I would now like to share with you what I hope you will regard as the first of my final instructions for the future."

The 50,000-plus crowd listened with renewed attentiveness at Toda's unexpected words. Hearing

the words final instructions, Toda's disciples sensed that something quite serious was at hand. Moreover, his reference to "what I hope you will regard as the first of my final instructions for the future" had followed his prediction of persecution and attacks.

Now, as the "Festival of Youth" was coming to a close, the euphoric atmosphere suddenly turned serious as the crowd wondered with anticipation just what Toda's final instructions would be.

"As I have long said," he continued, "youth will shoulder the responsibility for the coming era. There is no need for me to tell you that kosen-rufu is our mission. We must achieve it without fail. But today I would like to state clearly my feelings and attitude regarding the testing of nuclear weapons, a subject of heated debate in the world today.

"I hope that, as my disciples, you will inherit the declaration I am about to make today and, to the best of your ability, carry its message throughout the world."

At this point, the only thing that those listening could tell was that he was going to speak about nuclear weapons. Certainly, all bore deep fears and misgivings about the repeated nuclear testing of recent years, yet many of the members simply felt it was enough to give first priority to establishing a "Buddha land," in view of their mission to achieve kosen-rufu. The vast majority were convinced that once such a Buddha land was established, there would be no reason for nuclear weapons to exist.

However, kosen-rufu was still a long way off, and many keenly recognized that, as they proceeded toward this lofty goal, the threat of nuclear weapons was growing stronger with each passing day. Some were also haunted by the hideous notion that the path toward kosen-rufu would be obliterated in an instant if nuclear weapons actually came to be used.



Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda gave his declaration against nuclear weapons before a stadium full of youth gathered for a sports festival. His declaration is the basis of the SGI's peace movement.

Illustration by Teikichi Miyoshi

The memory of the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki strengthened this ominous sense of foreboding all the more.

It was difficult for Soka Gakkai members to avoid the issue of nuclear weapons. Yet by its very nature, it defied their comprehension. Filled with a vague sense of fear and unease, they were still striving to come to grips with the problem.

Toda was now about to make a declaration concerning this subject, clarifying his stance on nuclear arms and nuclear testing. Further, he had asked those present to carry on the spirit of this declaration, the first of his final instructions to them, and to disseminate that spirit throughout the world.

Toda was resolute. His words, infused with a powerful intensity, resounded clearly through the stadium.

"Although a movement to ban the testing of nuclear weapons is now under way around the world, it is my wish to attack the problem at its root, that is,

Currently, the United States nuclear arsenal includes 5,400 warheads loaded on intercontinental ballistic missiles at land and sea; 1,750 nuclear bombs and cruise missiles ready to be launched from B-2 and B-52 bombers; 1,670 nuclear weapons classified as tactical; and about 10,000 nuclear warheads held in bunkers around the country.

Source: Newsweek magazine, June 25, 2001, p. 28.

to rip out the claws hidden in the very depths of this issue. I therefore advocate that those who use nuclear weapons, from whatever country, whether victorious or defeated, be sentenced to death without exception.

“Why do I say this? Because we, the citizens of the world, have an inviolable right to live. Anyone who tries to jeopardize this right is a devil incarnate, a Satan, a monster. I propose that humankind apply, in every case, the death penalty to anyone responsible for using nuclear weapons, even if that person is on the winning side.”

Josei Toda viewed nuclear weapons as the most devilish contrivance of modern times. Devil refers to any workings or functions — earthly desires and illusion, for example — that torment the human heart and mind. The Chinese character for devil, *ma*, also connotes “murderer,” “robber of life,” or “destroyer.” One might say that the function of devils is to confound the human mind, to sap people’s life force and to destroy life itself.

In Buddhism, the epitome of such devilishness is personified as the “Devil of the Sixth Heaven.” Another name for this devil is Takejizaiten, which literally means “the king who makes free use of the fruits of others’ efforts for his own pleasure,” indicating one who desires to subjugate and control others.

In this light, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, which plays upon people’s fears to justify the maintenance of nuclear arsenals capable of mass annihilation, is itself a manifest function of the Devil of the Sixth Heaven.

A unique attribute of Toda’s declaration against nuclear weapons was its call for the destruction of this devilish nature lurking deep within the lives of human beings. At that time, a popular movement to ban nuclear weapons was spreading even in Japan. Nevertheless, Toda thought it urgently necessary to establish the view that nuclear weapons are devilish creations, an absolute evil whose very existence should be rejected. Without this, he concluded, it would be impossible to root out the devil that lurks behind the very existence of nuclear weapons.

His stance was that nuclear weapons and their use must be absolutely condemned, not from the standpoint of ideology, nationalism or ethnic identity, but instead from the universal dimension of humanity. Herein lies the greatness of Toda’s declaration against nuclear weapons. It is also the reason why his declaration would shine ever more brilliantly through the years.

In his declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, Josei Toda had proposed the death penalty, without exception, for those using nuclear bombs. This in no way, however, meant that he was affirming or advocating the death penalty as a general means of punishment.

Nine years earlier, in 1948, seven so-called “Class-A” war criminals, including wartime prime minister Hideki Tojo, were sentenced to death by hanging by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (in a proceeding commonly known as the Tokyo Trial). On that occasion, Toda had made the following statement: “The death penalty is absolutely wrong. Life imprisonment would have been more appropriate. Besides, those who dropped the atomic bombs are as guilty as [those sentenced to death in the Tokyo Trial]. I say this because, when viewed from the perspective of Buddhism, the death penalty, which is the killing of one person by another, can never be condoned.”

Further, Toda had often said that in Buddhism

there is no concept whereby one person judges another. Why, then, did Toda go so far as to use the words death penalty in his declaration?

Here, Toda was not advocating that legislation be introduced to authorize the death penalty for those who use nuclear weapons. Rather, his aim, quite simply, was to establish the idea that the use of nuclear weapons, an act that would deny humanity -its fundamental right to exist, must be judged as an absolute evil. He hoped that by allowing this idea to penetrate deeply into the hearts and minds of people throughout the world, particularly the leaders, it might serve as an internal restraint against the use of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, based on the perspective that the crime of committing such an absolute evil was deserving of the highest punishment, then it was inconceivable that anything short of the death penalty could possibly fit the crime.

Had Toda simply been satisfied to brand those who used nuclear bombs as devils, Satans and monsters, his declaration would have remained abstract. Most certainly, he could not have adequately conveyed his conviction that the use of nuclear weapons constituted an absolute evil. Toda's bold call for the death penalty was meant to crush the tendency within people's minds to justify the use of nuclear bombs. In a way, he was passing a sentence of death on the devilish tendencies dwelling within human life itself.

Toda had made his declaration at the height of the Cold War between East and West. The vast majority of assertions about nuclear weapons made during this time were based upon the ideology of one side or the other. Toda's declaration, however, was a radical departure from this way of thinking; it judged nuclear weapons as an evil from the most fundamental level of humanity.

Toda's voice grew more powerful.

"Even if a country should conquer the world through the use of nuclear weapons, the conquerors must be viewed as devils; as evil incarnate. I believe that it is the mission of every member of the youth division in Japan to disseminate this idea throughout the globe.

"I shall end by expressing my eager expectation

for you to spread my declaration to the entire world with the powerful spirit you have shown in today's sports festival.

As Toda brought his speech to a close, a great surge of applause rose from the crowd, and a whirlpool of profound sentiment enveloped the stadium. ❁



Toda thought it urgently necessary to establish the view that nuclear weapons are devilish creations, an absolute evil whose very existence should be rejected. Without this, he concluded, it would be impossible to root out the devil that lurks behind the very existence of nuclear weapons. Above is a LANCE missile, capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF VALUE

Immanuel Kant and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi:

Modern Civilization *Humanistic Civilization*

BY STANLEY OHNISHI, PhD, PHILADELPHIA

Stanley Ohnishi has a B.S. in physics from Kyoto University and a PhD in biophysics from Nagoya University in Japan. He has been at the forefront of life science for more than forty years, especially in the fields of antioxidants, sickle cell anemia and brain injury. He is currently the director of the Philadelphia Biomedical Research Institute and an SGI-USA guidance leader in Philadelphia.

Makiguchi and Soka University

On May 3, 2001, Soka University of America was opened in Aliso Viejo, California. It was the dream of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), the first president of the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-Creating Educational Society), to establish schools that would be dedicated to teaching his pedagogy — the Soka Kyoiku Taikei (Value-Creating Educational System). He bequeathed his dream to his dis-

ciple, Josei Toda, who in turn passed it on to his disciple Daisaku Ikeda, the current President of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI). In Japan, Mr. Ikeda, then president of the Soka Gakkai, opened Soka High School in April 1968 and Soka University in April 1971. He hung out a sign reading “Soka Daigaku” (Soka University) at the main gate of the school. This sign, which was originally calligraphed by Makiguchi, had been handed down to second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, and then on to President Ikeda. The heritage of this sign demonstrates the determination

of the successive disciples to realize the dream of their mentors.

Subsequently, President Ikeda opened Kansai Soka High School in 1973, Sapporo Soka Kindergarten in 1976, Tokyo Soka Elementary School in 1978, Kansai Soka Elementary School in 1982 and Soka Women’s Junior College in 1985. There are now Soka Kindergartens in Hong-Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. In Brazil, many elementary schools are adopting Makiguchi’s value-creating pedagogy. A kindergarten will be open soon. In Cambodia, an elementary school was built with the help of Japanese Soka Gakkai members. In Chaoshang,



Illustration and Greek photos by Stephanie Sydney, Immanuel Kant by Archivo Iconografico, S.A./CORBIS, Makiguchi by Seikyō Press

Fig. 1. Changes in value systems. From (A) Greek Tradition to (B) Kant, and from (B) Kant to (C) Makiguchi. Dotted arrows show where the changes took place.

China, an elementary School was built with the support of Chinese painter Fang Zhaoling and Hong-Kong SGI members. In India, Soka Women’s College is being built by an educator, Dr. Kumanan, who has great respect for peace and educational movements promoted by President Ikeda. In Italy, many educators have expressed interest in this student-centered pedagogy.

The opening of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo at the beginning of the twenty-first

century signals the worldwide spread of the humanistic value-creating pedagogy. On this historic occasion, I would like to explore the significance of Makiguchi’s theory of value creation from a historical point of view.

What Is Value?

From Plato (approx. 427–347 B.C.E.) to Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), western philosophy has typically pro- pounded three basic elements of

value — truth, goodness and beauty. Greek metaphysics regarded truth as “absolute,” because it was thought to be independent of human concep- tion, existing in an ideal state of its own. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle held similar beliefs regarding absolute truth. Absolute truth is the ideal, imma- terial and perfect, existing inde- pendent of human conception. Thus, absolute truth served as the standard of judgement for value, and was considered to be the

foundation of value [as depicted in Fig. 1 (A)]. It was not until later that the concept of truth was connected to the notion of an absolute deity.

During the Middle Ages, the concept of absolute truth was replaced by Christian Scholasticism, which taught that God created the universe, and was, therefore, the standard of judgement for value. Although this was different from Greek philosophy, both shared in the assumption that something existed beyond the human being. Even after the Renaissance, this notion was maintained. Descartes (1596–1650) ascribed the workings of the rational mind to God. The reason why Newton (1642–1727) developed the concepts of “absolute time” and “absolute space” in physics was to prove the existence of “absolute God.”

Immanuel Kant was unique in this regard because he denied that absolute truth exists independent of the human mind. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant wanted to show the possibilities as well as the limitations of pure reason. He challenged British Empiricism by saying that knowledge is not all derived from the senses. Kant said that if we have knowledge whose truth is certain to us even before experience — a *priori* — (in other words, by intuitive understanding), then absolute truth (and absolute science) would become possible. Experience gives us only separate sensations and events, which may

alter their sequence in the future, whereas truth is derived from the inherent structure of our minds, from the natural and inevitable manner in which our minds must operate. Mind is an active organism that molds and transforms sensations into an ordered cohesiveness of thought.

Although uniquely progressive, Kant’s view had limitations. According to him, since the structure of every mind is the same and all minds operate on the same principle, we can discern universal truth. However, it would seem logical to deduce that if truth is derived from our mind, each of us may come up with different truths, thus obviating universal applicability. It is suggested that Kant utilized the Newtonian concept of absolute time in formulating his ideas [ref. 1]. But in the twentieth century, the emergence of the theory of relativity as well as quantum physics demonstrate that the physical world does not behave as had previously been thought. So the validity of the naturally intuitive, *a priori* mind comes into question. Secondly, since Kant emphasized a rational and reasonable way of thinking, he denied worlds beyond our understanding. Religion, therefore, was not included in his thought system. However, he later said that human beings need religion to lead a moral life because they are held sway by the presumed eternal dichotomy of flesh and spirit. In Kant, we can see the dilemma faced by the Western philosophi-

cal tradition in reconciling the worldly and the spiritual, leading inexorably to the alienation of science from religion [ref. 2].

In *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant stated that moral conduct is based upon holy will, that is, the will toward goodness. His overriding principle was that action should be based only on whether or not the proposed action has the formal character of law, that is, the property of applying to all persons equally. He attributed the dignity of human life to the fact that people can live morally, performing virtuous deeds based upon their reason. Since Kant separated absolute-ness from truth, instead emphasizing goodness as the basis for proper human conduct, the traditional structure of the value system was significantly changed [as depicted in Fig. 1 (B)].

The Kantian tendency to put humans at the center of the world became the major stream in the materialistic civilization that was to follow. Since science deals with phenomena that can be tested through experience and experiment, it could be averred that nothing could go beyond man’s experience. The success of science influenced philosophy in a manner that denied the concept of the metaphysical world. Since, unlike earlier times, humanity was less likely to recognize something outside of itself to rely on in an absolute sense, science became the hoped for panacea to solve all problems and bring happiness to the world [ref. 3].



Sekkyo Press

The Soka schools founded by SGI President Ikeda are the realization of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's dream to establish value-creating education. Above, Soka University in Japan.

What Is Happiness?

A Greek philosopher, Epicurus (341–271 B.C.E.), taught what he asserted to be the best way of life, his philosophy coming to be known as Epicureanism. His guiding principle is that pleasure is good, and the ultimate aim of life is the absence of pain from the body and soul. He identified this as happiness. However, Epicurus also decreed that in order to secure happiness, a wise man should limit his desires and pleasure-seeking, practice virtue and live a secluded life. The most important aspect of human relationships is utility, which finds the highest expression in friendship. His ideal way of life is different from the modern interpretation of Epicureanism, which today signifies simple pleasure-

seeking, or hedonism.

From the Middle Ages through the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, many thinkers discussed Epicureanism in terms of pleasure or utility. David Hume (1711–76) and Adam Smith (1723–90) developed the ethical concept of sympathy in order to overcome the egoistic aspect of pleasure. In the nineteenth century, Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–73) developed the philosophy of Utilitarianism. Bentham replaced sympathy with the principle of utility. According to him, human beings have a tendency toward the desire for pleasure and aversion to pain. Happiness is the state where people enjoy pleasure and are free from pain. He applied this notion to the politics and well-being of society as a whole. He proposed the principle of the maximum

happiness of the maximum number of people in a particular society. He also proposed the concept of sanctions, which serve to bring the happiness of the individual into correlation with that of the general populace.

Bentham regarded human beings as abstract entities and did not consider the existence of various kinds of pleasure and pain. Mill, however, proposed that there are various qualitative differences in pleasure. He suggested that happiness lay in the pursuit of pleasure, which is superior in quality — namely, goodness. One's deeds are correct inasmuch as they lead to happiness, and incorrect in proportion to the decrease in happiness that they produce. He stated that he would prefer to be a dissatisfied human being rather than a satisfied pig, because the human can strive to achieve a higher hap-



Fotografica/CORBIS

Today's interpretation of Epicureanism signifies simple pleasure seeking or hedonism.

piness. In essence, he distinguished happiness from pleasure or mere pleasure-seeking.

There would appear to be a number of problems with these philosophies of happiness. How can we measure the degree of happiness? How can we determine the quality of pleasure? Is happiness only dependent upon pleasure? Is pleasure a desire for material objects or spiritual feelings, and so on?

It is interesting to note that Mill's concept of sanction includes both external sanction (physical, political, societal) and internal sanction (pain derived from violating duty and conscience). Mill considered that conscience has altruistic aspects; a desire to be One with other human beings. He considered the highest pleasure to be that which satisfies this type of conscience.

He thought that the desire for the oneness of all mankind should be taught as a religious practice. In other words, Mill proposed that the desire for altruism leads to the highest happiness, and it should be incorporated into religions. This notion is similarly expressed in Buddhism.

In Kant, the definition of happiness is quite different because he regarded happiness as "pleasure seeking" (hedonism). He wrote: "Morality is not properly the doctrine of how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness. Let us seek happiness in others; but for ourselves, perfection — whether it brings us happiness or pain" [ref. 4–6]. Kant continued: "A being possessed of a good will would always act as it ought. It would not, however, have the concepts of duty and moral obligation, which enter only when reason and desire find themselves opposed. The opposition is continuous, for man is at the same time both flesh and spirit." This idea reflected Kant's own religion of the Pietist sect of Protestantism [ref. 6].

Kant was an idealist, and the goal he presented was too strict — even stoic — for ordinary people to follow. The original Epicureanism (not the modern interpretation) is impractical because we cannot retire from the world. We also know that the modern interpretation — an endless pursuit of pleasure — will ultimately not bring us happiness. How can we find the path

between these two extremes, the Middle Way that will produce the greatest value for all? The answer can be found in Buddhism.

Buddhism considers that happiness consists of both material and spiritual aspects. Buddhism is not an egotistical, self-centered practice. It teaches that an individual can become happy by teaching others how to become happy. How can one contribute to the genuine, lasting happiness of others? The fundamental spirit of Buddhist practice is called *jihī*, which literally means mercy, but is deeper than that. *Jihī* means to remove suffering and give joy, but not by giving money, gifts or loving attention, which, while fine in their own right, cannot provide truly lasting happiness. In other words, to simply give joy or pleasure to others is not enough to bring them lasting absolute happiness. To remove the cause for unhappiness is the first priority.

In Buddhism, the ultimate cause for unhappiness is to slander the Law of life, *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*. That is, to commit an act that goes against the dignity and equality of human life. Therefore, to eradicate slander by teaching others the correct way of life is the noblest act of a Buddhist, and constitutes the greatest good. The Law of cause and effect in Buddhism teaches that those who perform this greatest good will not only benefit others, but will also accumulate good fortune for themselves and become happy.

In essence, Buddhism is con-

cerned with how to become happy, rather than what happiness is. Happiness in Buddhism is understood as a dynamic concept, not a static one. Buddhism is not a merely a spiritual, idealistic teaching, but rather, an action-oriented philosophy of daily life based on the highest wisdom.

David Norton, late professor of philosophy at Delaware University, (1930–95) pointed out the close similarity between the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin and the philosophy of American Renaissance thinkers Ralph W. Emerson (1803–82), David Thoreau (1817–62) and Walt Whitman (1819–92) [ref. 7].

Norton postulates that for Emerson, true happiness is the feeling that accompanies self-fulfilling work, where each person's basic work is the worthy living that actualizes his or her genius. Genius in Emerson's view does not mean exceptional intelligence, but rather divine idea, which each human being inherently possesses. It represents an innate potential that is similar to the Buddha nature that resides within every human being.

In this regard, it is important to note that some feelings that attend worthy living are not pleasant but painful. Moreover, every worthy life is, at times, thwarted by obstacles, and often, disturbingly so. Indeed the growth of good character is itself partly painful and the hedonistic recipe to seek pleasure and avoid pain will impede such growth. For Emerson, pain of this sort, which



Stephanie Sydney

Buddhism is an action-oriented philosophy more concerned with how to become happy rather than what happiness is.

participates in happiness or satisfaction, is welcome pain. According to Emerson, a life that fulfills its genius realizes inner satisfaction and, at the same time, objective worth in the world.

Thoreau also expressed the belief that the will to benefit others is important. Self-satisfaction cannot be complete without recognition and appreciation of the worth of others. Here, Norton sees the closest link between the thinkers of American Renaissance and Mahayana Buddhism, in which the purpose of life is to attain supreme personal happiness through helping others to become happy.

Regarding the concept of welcome pain, it is worth noting the view of T'ien-t'ai, a renowned Buddhist scholar and priest of sixth century China. He stated that when obstacles occur, we should be neither influenced nor

frightened. In other words, since obstacles represent a great chance for changing our karma, or destiny, we should welcome them rather than try to avoid them [ref. 8].

Makiguchi's Concepts of Value and Happiness

Makiguchi developed a remarkable philosophy of happiness. He believed that the goal of life is to become happy, and that a person is happy when he or she is fully creating value in their lives [ref. 9–11]. Here, happiness is defined by a person's actions, especially value-creating actions. Makiguchi pointed out that truth and value are entirely different concepts. Truth reveals "that which is," while value connotes a "subject-object relationship." Makiguchi argued that human beings cannot create



Baltrami/CORBIS

Immanuel Kant denied the existence of an absolute truth independent of the mind. Dr. Ohnishi suggests that "it would seem logical to deduce that if truth is derived from our mind, each of us may come up with different truths, thus obviating universal applicability." Above, artist Salvadore Dali ponders his own truth.

truth, but can create value. In contrast to the trend of Western philosophy from the Greek period, Makiguchi eliminated truth from the value system and replaced it with the concept of *ri* (Jpn).

The literal meaning of *ri* is profit or interest, which was further, translated as benefit [ref. 10, 11]. However, this sometimes invited criticism of Makiguchi's philosophy as being egoistic and greedy. Regarding this, Hajime Nakamura, a world renowned Buddhist scholar, praised Makiguchi's theory in that *ri* in Buddhism stands for both *jiri*

(gain for oneself) and *rita* (cause others to gain) [ref. 12, p. 500]. Nakamura wrote that, in Buddhism, important concepts are "working for others" and "to be beneficial for others." Nakamura also praised Makiguchi for developing a unique philosophy based upon his own experience. During that time, all college professors in Japan were simply imitating European schools of thought.

A key aspect of Makiguchi's theory

is the balance between individual and social values. He believed that individual gain or benefit is an entirely proper pursuit, but each individual has a responsibility to contribute to society as well. Thus, the concept of benefit for others is well established [ref. 9].

Makiguchi defined value as something favorable to human existence, while anti-value is something harmful. In other words, Makiguchi viewed value from the standpoint of human life. Kant interpreted truth to exist in reference to the human mind. However, in accordance

with European tradition, he still retained truth in his value system. Indeed, the quest for truth has been the center of human activity since the time of ancient Greece. On the other hand, Makiguchi considered that truth is neutral, and thus can be either valuable or harmful depending on how it is utilized. For instance, if dynamite is used to dig a coalmine or tunnel, it is valuable. But if it is used for war, it kills people.

Makiguchi's theory of value is quintessentially humanistic.

Makiguchi was not an academic scholar. Being a teacher and principal of elementary schools, Makiguchi developed his theory largely on his own. However, several thinkers influenced his theory of value.

Makiguchi was interested in aspects of John Dewey's (1859–1910) philosophy of Pragmatism. He also emphasized the importance of the sociological aspects of education and quoted from works by Auguste Comte (1797–1857) and Emile Durkheim (1858–1917).

Makiguchi's view and Dewey's postulations are similar in that both deal with the objective of discerning what is useful for the human being. However, there is a clear distinction. Pragmatism begins with the assertion that what is useful is the truth. In contrast, Makiguchi distinguished value from truth, and dropped truth from the value system. A pragmatic outlook has helped America become the world's strongest nation, but its morale

has declined. Racism, violence and drug abuse by schoolchildren have been increasing at an alarming rate. Our population is suffering from the disintegration of family and from an increase in mental disease and newly erupted viral diseases. The problems appear insoluble, but fortunately there is an answer, which I firmly believe can be found in a new value system based on the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin and Makiguchi's value-creating pedagogy. This, I am convinced, can lead to a peaceful twenty-first century.

Makiguchi defined beauty as an individual, emotional value; usefulness (to self and others) as the relationship between individual value and social value; and goodness as social value. In order to discourage the pursuit of selfish interest, Makiguchi emphasized goodness as the foundation of the value system.

Fig. 1 explains the relationship between the theories of Kant and Makiguchi. Fig. 1 (A) depicts the traditional concept of value in Greek philosophy, specifically Platonism and Neo-Platonism, which were in favor until the eighteenth century. Fig. 1 (B) shows Kant's viewpoint, which influenced the materialistic civilization from the nineteenth century until today, and Fig. 1 (C) shows Makiguchi's ideal in which Goodness is placed at the bottom to show that it is most important. In (A), absolute Truth was the foundation, while in (B), Truth became relative to the human

mind, and instead, Goodness became the absolute foundation. In Kant, what is absolute in the world is "good will"—the will to follow moral laws. Therefore, in the value system of Kant, Truth already started losing its significance. Finally, in (C), Makiguchi dropped Truth from the value system and replaced it with "Beneficial to self and others." Makiguchi's value system is based upon the effect of an action upon human beings—whether the effect is favorable or not. Thus his value system is totally human-centered.

The Lives of Kant and Makiguchi

The differences between Kant's and Makiguchi's philosophy can be summarized as follows: For Kant, the concept of truth is still important, but the central role of the human being is emphasized and goodness becomes the foundation. Happiness, however, is not the goal of life, and body and mind are separated reflecting the Christian (Pietist) view. Science and religion are also separated following the tradition initiated by Descartes. In contrast, Makiguchi's way of thinking reflects Buddhist views, so there is a marked difference. Makiguchi believed that Buddhism is aligned with science and that its validity could be proven through experience.

Although Kant and Makiguchi differ in these aspects, there are several interesting similarities. Kant studied and lectured on nat-

ural history and geography. He wrote several articles on the relationship between land, sea, mountains, rivers, humans and animals. In 1755, at age thirty-one, he published *The General Natural History* and *Theory of the Heavens*. His holistic conception of the universe and emphasis on the human being as a central focus undoubtedly contributed to the development of human-centered philosophy.

Makiguchi also began with the study of geography and emphasized the harmony between the human being and his environment. He published *Geography of Human Life* in 1903 at thirty-two [ref. 13].

A persistent theme in Kant's critical philosophies, which he wrote between ages fifty-seven and sixty-four, is summarized in his words as "Starry heavens above and moral law within." In keeping with his critical reasoning, Kant at first denied religion as illogical and superstitious. He wrote: "It is impossible by means of metaphysics to progress from knowledge of this world to concepts of God and a proof of his existence through cogent inferences. The concept of God is one which belongs originally not to physics, but to morals." In essence, Kant said that man cannot prove the existence of god. However, he acknowledged the role of religion in contributing to a moral life. He allowed that human beings need to have religion and a god to believe in.

After his studies in geography,

Makiguchi became interested in philosophy and authored “*Theory of Value*.” At fifty-seven, he became a Buddhist. He developed the pedagogical philosophy and compiled it at fifty-nine as “*Value-Creating Educational System*” [ref. 9–11].

At age sixty-nine, Kant criticized the church in an attempt to correct and purify Christianity. He wrote that asking a blessing or waiting for forgiveness of sin by an external object of worship is not the real essence of Christianity. In true Christianity, a revolution of the mind and good human behavior is essential. Each person should do one’s best to become a good human being. Then, and only then, a greater existence (God) will supplement one’s ability. The question is not what to do to receive God’s blessing, but what to do in order to become worthy of receiving God’s help. He also stated that priests should serve church members, not control them in an authoritarian manner [ref. 6]. As a result of such critical views, Kant was persecuted by the government and prohibited from lecturing or writing about religion.

At seventy-two, Makiguchi criticized the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and its doctrines in a manner similar to Kant’s criticism of the church.

In 1795, at age seventy-one, Kant published a monumental work titled *For the Eternal Peace*. In it he expressed his belief that war is an absolute evil, since killing someone is an act of using a moralistic human being as a

materialistic tool, and therefore a violation of human rights. He proposed to establish an international league to promote this idea. It took two centuries until this idea was materialized as the League of Nations (1920) and then, the United Nations (1945).

As a Buddhist, Makiguchi was also opposed to war. In the World War II era he criticized the war-mongering Japanese government as well as the Shinto religion for being a tool of the government’s militaristic policies. He also protested against the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood for knuckling under to the government and allowing the inclusion of a Shinto shrine in their temples. When Makiguchi was ordered to worship the Shinto talisman, he, unlike the priesthood, refused. In 1943, along with his closest disciple Josei Toda and twenty-two other leaders of the Soka Koiku Gakkai, he was imprisoned at seventy-two. While all the others leaders except for Toda recanted their beliefs to escape further persecution, Makiguchi remained firm in his convictions and died in prison at seventy-three, a martyr for the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin.

Both Kant and Makiguchi were men of high moral character who lived up to their beliefs. It may be said that Makiguchi completed the development of the philosophy of value begun by Kant. Greek philosophy was the foundation of the Spiritual Civilization up until the eighteenth century. Kant’s philosophy contributed to shaping the

Materialistic Civilization during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Makiguchi’s philosophy will be the foundation of Humanistic Civilization, which will flourish during the twenty-first century.

Makiguchi’s ardent desire for world peace was embodied in his successors Toda and current SGI President Daisaku Ikeda. President Ikeda’s ceaseless efforts to promote peace by meeting with 1,500 world leaders and visiting fifty-four nations is now changing the course of civilization from distrust to dialogue, from confrontation to coexistence. ☸

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万文化交流促进会成立大会



Alena Tansey

Stephanie Tansey, founder of The New School of Collaborative Learning, speaks on working together to build the cultural Silk Road of the future at the East West Culture Exchange (1999).

My Debt to Makiguchi AND HIS LEGACY –

BY STEPHANIE TANSEY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Stephanie Tansey founded The New School of Collaborative Learning, a bilingual and international school in Beijing, China in 1994. She started the East West Exchange and the East West Culture Exchange in Chengdu, Sichuan in 1999. She is now setting up youth councils in high schools and at George Mason University in metropolitan Washington, D.C., to involve youth in solving the drug and violence problems in their community.

Born and raised in Japan, she now lives in Rockville, Maryland, with her husband Bob, a dedicated diplomat and father, and her children Alena and David, who attended NSCL in Beijing.



Jon Zatzkin



Alena Tansley

Students on the annual Valley Forge-Long March, celebrating the struggles of men and women who are willing to endure hardship to uphold their beliefs.

Today I believe we are facing a crisis in education in the U.S., and I am worried, as are many others, about the future of the young Americans who attend today's public schools. I am not concerned about the level of skills or academic proficiency as much as I am about the type of human beings coming out and entering society. What values do they bring to society? What do they learn in school to help make

the world a better place? Are they going to be able to turn our world's problems around? Moreover, what do we learn from our SGI Buddhist organization that can help us warm and encourage the hearts of others in our communities so we can improve and protect our planet? The concepts applied in Soka education offer answers to these vital questions.

I am an educator in the field of social foundations¹ of educa-

tion. The New School of Collaborative Learning, the bilingual international school that I founded in Beijing, China, is located in a Chinese elementary school. We educate Americans, Asians and Europeans.

In establishing the school, I was guided by the educational concepts of first president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. His book *Education for Creative Living* became my foremost source of wisdom and

encouragement along with current SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's ideas on Soka education. I used other philosophies as well, including John Dewey's, and collaborated with teachers and students, both Chinese and non-Chinese, and with people from the Sidwell Friends School here in Washington, D.C.

I learned from Makiguchi that a good teacher lays down guidelines, points to the sages of the past, offers a framework, but expects students to figure out what to do. Makiguchi says, "It is the function of education to guide unconscious living to consciousness, valueless living to value, and irrational living to reason."² Teachers can best help to guide others by example, by shared experience, by being a model who is doing the same thing, by being a lantern in the dark — helping society through wisdom, not by just acquiring more and more knowledge. Knowledge must be coupled with wisdom. We need to create educational systems that enable people to support the planet and its inhabitants.

At the New School of Collaborative Learning, the balance of self and other was the foundation of the school. What we needed were teachers who could, based on compassion, put students in the driver's seat of their own education. The concern of the administration and the teachers is to motivate students to improve the world.

A team of teachers, one Chinese and the other not, instructs each level. One particu-



Alena Tansey

NSCL students on a field trip studying how a Chinese province creates a sustainable community by working together.

lar Chinese teacher was paired with a teacher from England who taught Chinese language, math and art. That first year she had difficulty getting students to take her seriously. The second year she paid more attention to what other teams were doing and attended a course I was teaching on Makiguchi's methods. It stressed the formula that if you care deeply for your students they will be inspired to learn independently as well as care for their society. At first she had trouble grasping this but after many discussions she came to understand what she calls "the human way" of class management and opened her heart. She is now the best teacher we have and her students love her, work hard and are motivated.

What I discovered is that Makiguchi's theory is very relevant today in the field of education. I also discovered that Makiguchi was laying down his ideas for the forerunner of the SGI, the Value-Creating

Education Society (Soka Kyoiku Gakkai), in his book *Education for Creative Living*. Moreover, I learned how to be a better guide to others in our Buddhist community; how to help them find their mission in life, and how to grow in compassion and wisdom and feel the creative force within my life as well. I encourage everyone to use the tenets of Soka education to reach the hearts of others in the greater community of life, so we can improve and protect our planet.

The Soka Gakkai International is concerned with guiding its members toward their own enlightenment and the enlightenment of the planet. Our practice — for ourselves and for others — is all about developing our true self, our Buddha nature, and helping others discover their own path and mission. It is about making a difference in our homes, at work, in our communities and in our Buddhist community. We practice with our fellow SGI

members and then create the changes in society that we wish to see in the world. This is creating value. Since Makiguchi focused on how to create value, studying his ideas is critical as we polish our lives and the SGI. The more we learn how to create value, the more influence we have in saving the world, and the more our lives begin to flower.

In *Education for Creative Living*, it states: “As long as individuals think only of themselves, there is no room for ethics. For cooperative and harmonious ethical life to make sense, people must first be receptive to the needs of others.... As humans we are born into society. Every one of us should offer his or her services to society for the good of all in the best way individually possible. No one lives a life apart; no occupation arises independent of the needs of others around us. In the rightful order of mutuality, each person, each labor, is part of the whole.... Entering into cooperative social living requires taking the ends of individual life and simultaneously applying them as means to the fulfillment of the greater common life.”³

Teachers and leaders who care

are of primary importance. Now that we have the Internet, knowledge is easy to access — but knowledge alone will not save the planet. We need to develop our humanity as teachers, leaders or parents so that we can guide unconscious living to consciousness, valueless living to value, and irrational living to reason.

President Ikeda writes: “The moment one resolves to join in and work alongside everyone, to respect everyone and have the spirit to humbly learn from them, one embarks on the road to becoming a great leader. This was also one of the essential points of the ‘leadership revolution’ of which President Makiguchi spoke.”⁴

If Makiguchi created the idea of Soka education because of his concern for schooling, he used ideas also to create the SGI.

Adding value to the world is what Buddhism is all about. The more we consciously add value, the more powerfully we change the world. Who is going to ensure that our schools produce students who want to improve the world? We are. How do you make the world a better place? Read Makiguchi and Ikeda’s thoughts on Soka education. Soka education offers answers to these vital questions to educators and everyone else. ☸

1. Social Foundations is a field in education (like curriculum and administration) that looks at the social foundations of education philosophy, curriculum and teaching methods with the view that how and what you teach produces the social foundation for your society. Changing society requires that we change how and what we teach. Makiguchi, Dewey and Ikeda are examples of such educators who see education as the way to change society.

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The village in Guizhou, Sichuan, Southwest China, where NSCL students spent a week living with peasants to study how ancient cultures and the modern world communicate.

Alena Tansey

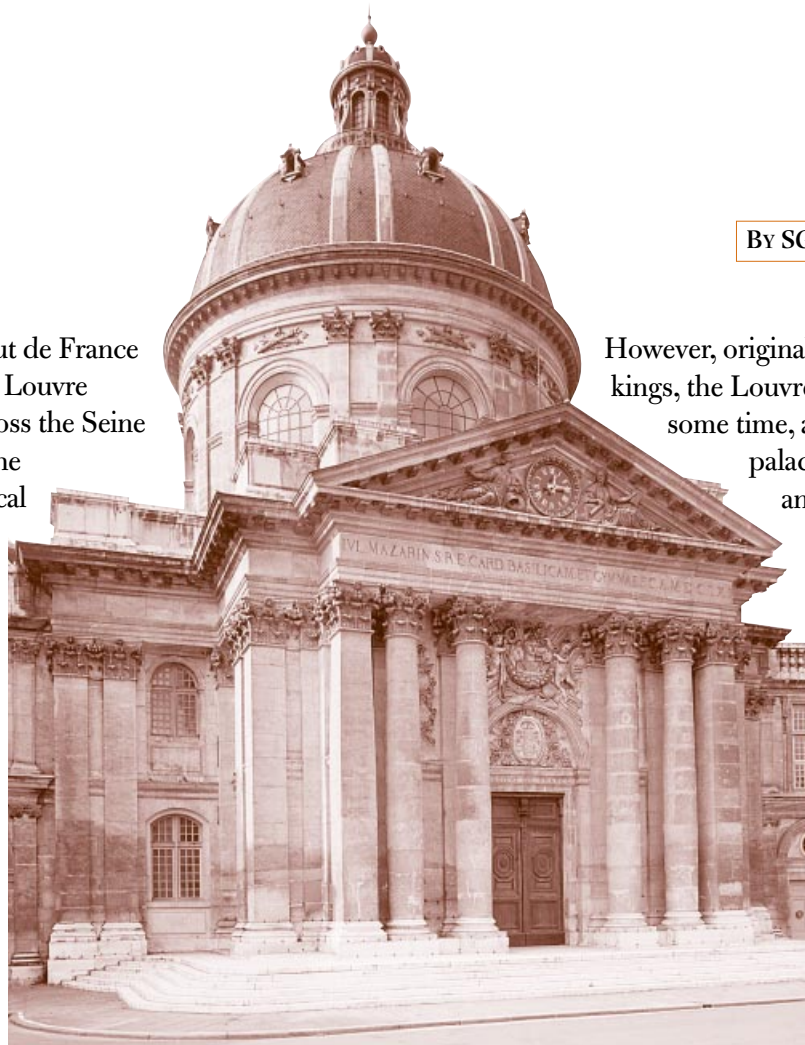
Speaking

AT THE INSTITUT DE FRANCE

BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

The Institut de France faces the Louvre from across the Seine River. The Louvre represents political power, and the Institut power of intellect.

It would actually be more correct to say that the Louvre *used* to represent political power. The Louvre is located in the center of Paris directly west of the Ile de la Cité, the French capital's historic core. Today, as an art museum, it serves as the repository of artistic treasures not only of France, but also from around the world.



Angelo Homeli/Corbis

However, originally a palace of kings, the Louvre remained for some time, along with the palace at Versailles, an integral part of the nucleus of political power in France.

The Louvre is situated on the right bank of the Seine, and the Institut on the left, relative to the direction of the river's flow. On a map of Paris, the right bank is to the river's north and the

The Institut de France in Paris, where SGI President Daisaku Ikeda spoke in June 1999.



Seikyo Press

In his lecture “Art and Spirituality in the East and the West,” SGI President Ikeda says bringing to bloom the ‘creative life’ inherent in all people would lead to an inner revolution in the life of the human being and the revitalization of art.

left bank is to the south.

I would like to emphasize the fact that the Institut de France is positioned neither downstream from nor next to the Louvre, but directly opposite. The seat of government and the seat of intellect have long stood together at the very center of grand Paris, separated by the serene and motherly Seine.

This is evidence of the tremendous import that has been placed on the Institut’s existence. While people often speak of the fortitude of the British and discipline of the Germans, the French have long been known as people of intellect. Indeed, great value is placed on intellect in France.

The Institut’s Origins

It is well known how Napoleon, while pursuing his Egyptian campaign, would refer to himself first as a member of the Institut de France before using his title of supreme military commander. Upon being selected as a member of the Académie des Sciences¹ (in 1797), he remarked: “True conquests, those which yield not a single regret, are conquest over ignorance. Therefore, the most honorable and useful endeavor for all nations, is to contribute to the expansion of human thought. The real power of the French Republic

from now on must consist in allowing not a single new idea that is not our own.— Bonaparte.”²

The Institut de France, a sanctuary of intellect, has a long and glorious tradition as one of the foremost authorities on thought and culture not only in France, but in all of Europe, and as a fulcrum of the human spirit. It is a well-spring of refined and exalted culture. It is a “citadel” of knowledge that has fought to uphold the values of beauty, intellect and art in order to preserve France’s identity.

The origins of the Institut go back to the time of Louis XIII (1601–43). The Académie Française was founded in 1635

under the iron-willed Cardinal de Richelieu.³ Later, during the reign of Louis XIV (1638–1715), the Académie des Sciences (Academy of Sciences), Académie des Beaux-Arts (Academy of Fine Arts) and a number of other institutions were established. Together these were known as the Royal Académie.

The Royal Académie was dissolved during the French Revolution, but Napoleon reconstituted it as the Institut de France in 1795. Behind the seat of the Institut's chairman there stands today a statue of Napoleon holding a crown of laurels. Thus, while the Institut de France was officially established at the end of the eighteenth century, its scholarly and artistic traditions go back more than 150 years earlier.

At present, the Institut de France is made up of five academies. The oldest of these, the Académie Française (language and literature), has forty members all holding lifetime appointments. Because the doors of this academy are engraved with the words, *À l'immortalité* (Aiming for Immortality), its members are respectfully referred to as the "Forty Immortals." It is considered a great honor for a French citizen to become a member of the Académie Française. The French art scholar René Huyghe (1907–97), with whom I met on several occasions and subsequently published a dialogue, was one of the Forty Immortals.

There is also the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres



Former French Culture Minister Andre Malraux.

(history and archaeology), the Académie des Sciences, the Académie des Sciences morales et politiques (moral and political sciences), and the Académie des Beaux-Arts. Membership in each of the other academies is also limited to certain numbers.

Springtime in Paris

Ten years ago, on June 14, 1989, I spoke at the Institut de France at the invitation of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. My talk was titled "Art and Spirituality in the East and the West."

It was the final week of a more than one-month long trip to four European countries. In the United Kingdom, I met with Her Royal Highness Princess Anne and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, visited the University of London and the University of Oxford, and attended the opening of the Oriental Gallery of the Taplow Court Grand Culture

Centre. I also attended three SGI meetings — the First SGI European General Meeting, a conference commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the start of the kosen-rufu movement in the United Kingdom, and a conference of top leaders — in an effort to meet with and encourage my fellow SGI members.

In Sweden, which I was visiting for the first time, I met with King Carl XVI Gustaf and Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, and we discussed a variety of issues relating to peace and environmental protection. I also attended the opening of the "Dialogue with Nature" exhibition of my photographs at the Stockholm Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, and the First SGI Nordic General Meeting.

In France, I met with President François Mitterrand and Senate President Alain Poher, and visited the University of Paris V (Sorbonne). In Switzerland, I visited the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, where I was presented with the UNHCR's Humanitarian Award, and attended an SGI-Switzerland General Meeting.

My address at the Institut de France took place amid this arduous schedule.

Paris in June is a city abloom with flowers. Since the winters there are harsh, Parisians look forward to spring that much more. With the arrival of May, blossoms everywhere begin to open as if on cue, and by June, flower beds on street corners and in the squares are a multicolored

pageant. The gardens of people's homes also vie to outdo one another in beauty.

The cotton-like tufts from the horse chestnut trees lining the streets dance in the wind eddies at street corners. When the breeze picks up, the blossoms come down like snow, covering one's shoulders and painting the streets white.

Crimson roses in flower arcades enrich one's heart with their exquisiteness. And the trees display a fresh tint of green.

Driving through Paris in all its springtime splendor, we approached the Institut de France via a road that runs along the Seine. It was evening and the city was bathed in a clear luminescence.

A Proud Stone Edifice

The Institut was moved from within the Louvre Palace to its present location on the left bank of the Seine in 1805. Louis XIV's prime minister Mazarin⁴ entrusted the task of constructing a proud stone edifice to house the facility to the hand of the same master architect who had handled construction of the Louvre.

Entering the gate and making our way across the cobblestoned drive, we arrived at the entrance, which was richly draped in green ivy. There, Marcel Landowski, permanent secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, kindly waited to welcome us. It was our first meeting, but he was most genial and received us with a warm smile. His tranquil eyes shone with



French philosopher Henri-Louis Bergson.

Bettmann/Corbis

intelligence and creativity.

Mr. Landowski is a distinguished composer. Although he is first and foremost a musician who says that music is his *raison d'être* and that composing is his life, he is also a great leader with the ability to bring out the personality and talent of outstanding artists and intellectuals.

When French author André Malraux (1901–76), who is an old acquaintance of mine, became France's Minister of Cultural Affairs, he asked Mr. Landowski to serve as director of the Department of Musical Affairs, in which capacity the illustrious composer left behind a record of brilliant achievement. Several years after we met, Mr. Landowski became chancellor of the Institut de France, with responsibility for all five academies. I sent him a telegram expressing my sincere congratulations on his appointment.

During my visit to the Institut, I was delighted to also have the chance to speak informally with René Huyghe and his wife, who

had come to welcome us.

My address was scheduled for 5:00 p.m. in the Institut's conference hall. I planned on speaking for an hour, allowing time for interpretation.

The event began with greetings from President André Jacquemin of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. This was followed by a generous welcome from Mr. Landowski. He thanked me for coming and remarked: "The power of spirituality is the driving force behind artistic activity. I understand that the principle of the "human revolution," which the Soka Gakkai International is promulgating, rejects all forms of violence. Here at the Institut de France, for more than 350 years we have continuously sought to promote fraternity and humanity, and, through various forms of art, have constantly striven to enable people to respond appropriately to advances and improvements in their daily lives. In this context, we are extremely pleased to be able to hear President Ikeda's views on art and spirituality."

I began by reading a poem I had composed, and I also closed with a poem. While I'd had many opportunities to speak at universities and scholarly institutions in different parts of the world, this was the first time that I recited my own poetry at the outset and conclusion of a speech. Nor have I done so since. In a country of poetry such as France, it seems that my lecture style was received by the members of the Academy in the spirit of an intellectual challenge.

The Blossoming of the “Creative Life”

A portion of my address went as follows: “Since ancient times, art has appeared as a natural, irrepressible manifestation of human spirituality. While being manifest in various concrete forms through its guileless pursuit of expression, it also conveys a certain wholeness penetrating all life. It has further aspired to identify the individual life of the human being with the universal macrocosm. In contemporary times, however, art has lost its power to unite human beings with the universe and nature; its “life force” has weakened.”

I also touched on the Buddhist concepts of dependent origination — the interrelation of all things — and nonsubstantiality, as well as the idea expounded in the Lotus Sutra that life is infinitely unfettered and dynamic. Bringing to bloom the “creative life” inherent in all people, I said, would lead to an inner revolution in the life of the human being and the revitalization of art. This resonates with ideals sought by the great French poet Paul Valéry, who advocated the coming together of like minds on a spiritual level, and André Malraux, who foresaw the coming of a “spiritual revolution.” I further stated that this would become a wellspring of energy bringing renewed life not only to art, but all fields of human endeavor.

Statues of such renowned



Marcel Landowski, French composer and former chancellor of the Institut de France.

French writers, artists and scholars as Corneille, Molière, Racine and La Fontaine graced the four walls of the high-ceilinged conference hall at the Institut. The color scheme was simple and unaffected. The white sculptures stood in stark contrast against the dignified wood-paneled walls. The wooden tables and chairs were all covered in deep green velvet.

While decorated with a casual simplicity, the room exuded a feeling of pleasant solemnity. It needed no further ornamentation. The atmosphere conveyed the importance of doing away with the superficial and focusing on the essential when it comes to learning, intellect or art.

Buddhism in Europe is generally associated with the static and nihilistic ideas of the Hinayana teachings. I keenly felt the need to change this static image and bring about an awareness of the existence of a Buddhism that is alive and active in the present age.

The French philosopher Henri-Louis Bergson attempted to understand all phenomena as part of a continuity rather than as having a fixed aspect. This point of view is intimately linked to the Mahayana concept of nonsubstantiality. While touching on the views of eminent Western intellectuals such as Bergson, Valéry and Huyghe, I discussed the exciting development of the creative life expounded in the Lotus Sutra — the quintessence of Mahayana Buddhism.

In order to clearly convey the heart of the Lotus Sutra as a teaching of the joy of life, I introduced the passage from Nichiren Daishonin’s famous writing “Great Evil and Great Good” that goes: “Even if you are not the Venerable Mahakashyapa, you should all perform a dance. Even if you are not Shariputra, you should leap up and dance. When Bodhisattva Superior Practices emerged from the earth, did he not emerge dancing?” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1119).

The Lotus Sutra is abound with such artistic imagery. Its climax dynamically describes the emergence of countless bodhisattvas from the earth, saying that they “performed dances,” “leapt up and danced” and “emerged dancing.” This is what is meant by a creative life pulsing with vitality. It symbolizes the supreme joy that is unleashed when we deeply pursue a life based on universal truth and dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to improving society.



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In France, great value has always been placed on the intellect. SGI President Ikeda visits with French student division members outside the University of Paris V in June 1989.

In this connection, I cited a beautiful passage in Valéry's exquisite dialogue "Dance and the Soul" where the writer has Socrates comment on the sight of a dancing woman.⁵

Responses From Intellectuals

The members of the Academy, all representing the French intellectual community, listened earnestly to my address. The atmosphere was quiet and tense. The tables were equipped with built-in lights to aid the participants, as the only other lighting in the hall came from the chande-

liers and natural sunlight shining through windows high above. Some people avidly took notes.

The speaker does not make his or her address from an elevated podium. Rather, both speaker and listeners are seated at tables of the same height. Moreover, probably owing to a tradition that values dialogue, each desk is equipped with a microphone.

The solemn mood made one hesitant to even clear one's throat. The only sounds that could be heard in the hall were my voice and that of the interpreter.

I always pour my whole life into preparing the manuscripts of my addresses, polishing and refining until the very last minute.

I cannot overlook even the smallest detail in presentation — from the resonance of my voice, to the spacing of words and places to break for interpretation. It is an all-out struggle. Before those who listen with the heart, one must speak with the heart.

Actually, up until I was about to enter the hall I had thought that, depending on the mood in the room, I might mention the story of Cosette and Marius from Victor Hugo's great saga *Les Misérables*. That's because situated just to the south of the Institut de France is the Jardin du Luxembourg, one of Paris's most beautiful parks, which is the setting where these two youth first

encounter one another from afar. Hugo describes with penetrating brilliance just how their hearts danced in anticipation of the mere sight of each other. As a young man, I was utterly captivated by this part.

It occurred to me that I might share with my audience how I had been looking forward to that day with a feeling of excitement akin to that felt by the two youths in Hugo's drama. But the atmosphere in the conference hall did not lend to such levity. From start to finish, a keen tension filled the air.

I concluded my remarks with another poem of mine:

*And here is Art,
Inviting the soul by reaching
her hand out
Toward a soothing and
serene wood,
Toward a garden where imagina-
tion blazes across the sky;
Inviting it to the noble stage
of wisdom
And leading it toward
the far-off horizon
Of universal civilization.*

Thus concluded my hourlong speech.

When I finished with "Merci," the hushed hall suddenly erupted with applause. It seemed to go on forever. People came up to me one after another to shake my hand.

Mr. Landowski graciously praised my address as an epic poem in and of itself, calling it "a work of art dedicated to the pursuit of the essence of life, and to bringing tranquil joy to our lost

and wounded spirits." He further commented: "Modern art tends to be removed from life and daily existence. Your talk has taught me the importance of harmonizing such art with the fundamental reality of the universe. It was a highly thought-provoking speech, which has reminded me of the things that really matter that are presently overlooked."

The sculptor Jean Cardot, who is a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, remarked with delight that my lecture was spiritually, morally and intellectually stimulating, and he commented on my deep understanding of the culture of the West. And the composer Daniel Lesur, a member of the same academy, remarked that I had captured the essence of life and art, and clarified art's universality. Many others praised the speech for its logical clarity, for getting at the essence of Buddhism and for its poetic beauty. The response was really beyond anything I could have hoped for.

Dr. Serge-Christophe Kolm, director of studies at the School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris, who has a profound understanding of Buddhism, said that the relation between the Lotus Sutra and the artistic life was a completely new perspective for him. And President Gabriel Peronnet of the French Association for the United Nations remarked that as a Westerner who prizes reason and inquiry, he had listened to my address with a rather critical ear, but that in the end, he found that

he could not help being moved by and agreeing with my views. He also highly acclaimed my commitment to action.

Thanks to the efforts of many people, my address at the Institut de France elicited a tremendous response and was a great success.

Encouraging Emissaries From the Future

The French SGI members also took good care of us during our stay. I was particularly struck by the growth of these dear friends, whom I had not seen in two years, as well as by how much their activities had developed.

Prior to the address at the Institut, I attended a gathering to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the start of the kosen-rufu movement in France. A thousand members from six countries came together under azure skies in the verdant garden of the Soka University European Language Training Center in Verrieres-le-Buisson, a southern suburb of Paris.

Adults and children alike participated joyfully in the event. Everyone rejoiced in the network of happiness they had constructed. It was a departure toward a wonderful future.

Girls and boys performed skits and sang songs. We all earnestly applauded their sincere efforts. Speaking directly with these pure-hearted youth, I gave my all to praising and encouraging them. We took a commemorative

photo together. As usual, the impassioned performance of the blue-and-white clad fife and drum corps members stole the show.

Children grow up in an instant — at a rate that adults can hardly comprehend. It is crucial for children in their formative years to be bathed in the nourishment of love and encouragement. That is why, wherever I go in the world, I pour my heart and soul into giving courage to the emissaries from the future with whom I may have occasion to meet.

A Meeting With Members of the Fife and Drum Corps

In the spring of 1973, I made a stop in florid Paris en route to green London, where my dialogue with the illustrious British historian Dr. Arnold J. Toynbee (1889–1975) was taking place. At the time, there was only one small community center in the whole of France.

A mini culture festival was held in the garden of that center, located in the Paris suburb of Sceaux. A light breeze was blowing. The thirty-member French fife and drum corps, made up of girls ranging in age from five to twenty, performed the march “The Thunderer.”

Everyone joined in singing the fife and drum corps favorite “Frères Jacques.” The short song was repeated over and over, to the point where I could even remember the French lyrics! The Japanese version of this tune is

also popular in Japan. The song goes: “Are you sleeping, are you sleeping, Brother John, Brother John. Morning bells are ringing, morning bells are ringing. Ding ding dong, ding ding dong.”

I remarked to the gathering: “People everywhere are as if sleeping amid their suffering. It is our mission to rouse them with the bell of Buddhism.”

Some fifteen years had passed since then when I visited Paris for my address at the Institut de France in 1989. The fife and drum corps members had grown into fine young women. Delighted that I would be speaking at the Institut de France, and understanding the event’s significance, each was also challenging her own mission. In their own unique capacities, they were gaining rich life experience and devoting themselves wholeheartedly in their chosen fields of endeavor. Nothing could be more wonderful than seeing youth develop into capable people making their way through life freely and happily.

Following my address, a lovely reception was held. After exchanging greetings with many of the guests, my party and I took our leave from the Institut. Our car passed through the streets of Paris’ sixth district as we headed south. The sixth district, where the Institut de France is located, is an area truly suited to being a center of intellect. The neighboring fifth district, incidentally, is home to a large number of universities and scholarly institutions,

such as the Sorbonne.

The sixth district is the site of the plaza St. Germain des Prés and its environs, as well as buildings that date back to the Middle Ages and those that symbolize intellect and art. Many intellectuals, attracted by the staid academic atmosphere produced by the concentration of publishers of specialized books on philosophy and thought, have settled there. There are famous cafes like Café de Flore and Les Deux Magots where such writers as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, the parents of existentialism, used to discuss philosophy and life. Today, the area continues to attract young scholars and artists.

Feeling pleasantly fatigued, I fondly reminisced about the comings and goings of great French thinkers as we made our way through the streets of Paris. ☸

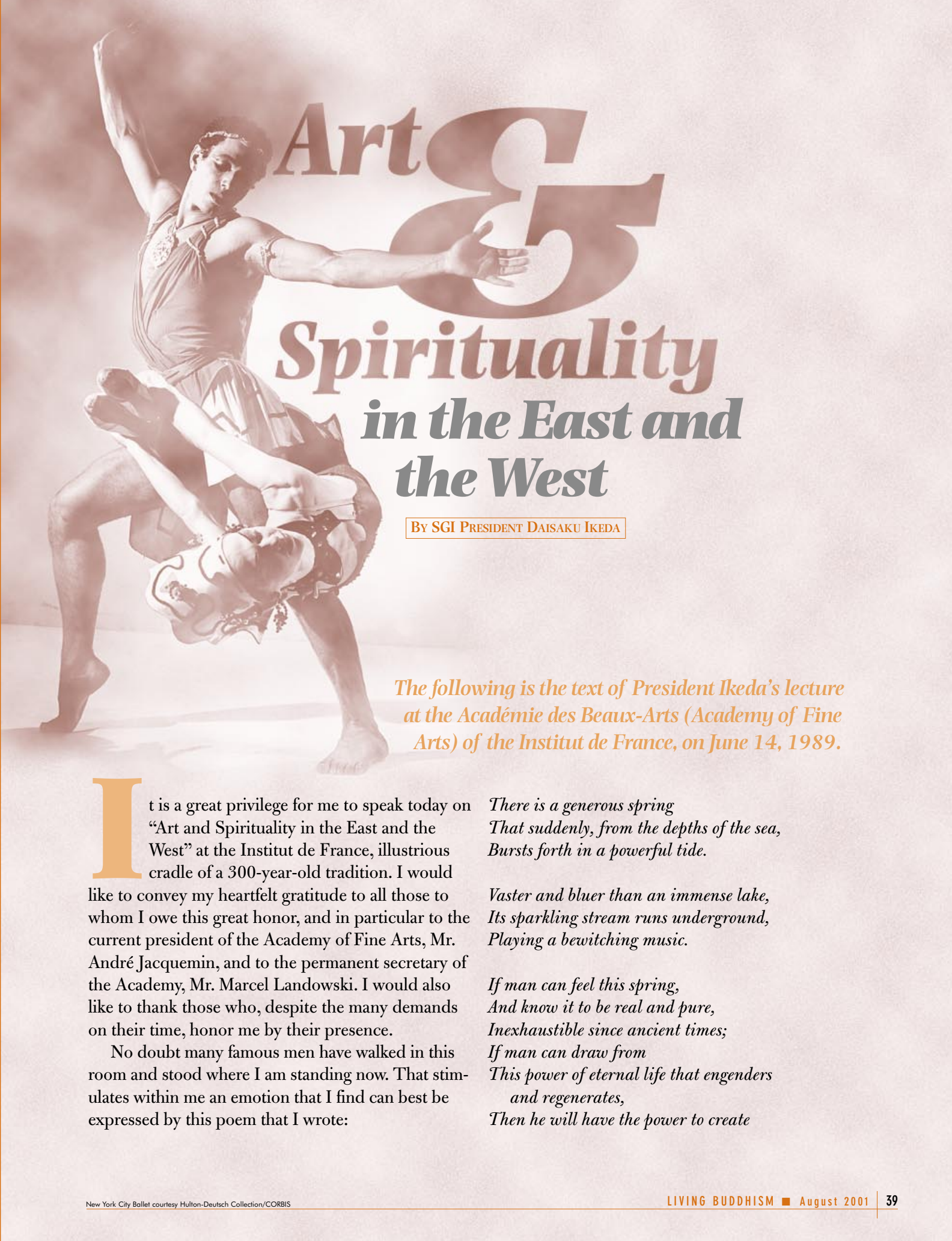
1. Académie des Sciences: French scientific society established in 1666. In 1793, after the French Revolution, the Academy was suppressed by the National Convention. Its functions were resumed in 1795 by a branch of the newly formed Institut de France.

2. Translated from French: Napoléon, “Remerciement Académique,” 26 December 1797, *Mémoires et Œuvres de Napoléon*, ed. Tancredé Martel (Paris: Albin Michel, 1926), pp. 378–79.

3. Richelieu (1585–1642): French politician who served as advisor to Louis XIII. He actively sought to protect writers and artists, and founded the Académie Française.

4. Mazarin (1602–61): French cardinal and statesman. Succeeded Richelieu as prime minister in 1642.

5. “While this explanation and vibration of life, while this supremacy of tension, and this whirling into the greatest agility humanly possible, have the virtues and powers of flame; and that the shames, the worries, the sillinesses, and the monotonous fare of existence are consumed in it, making a shining light in our eyes of what is divine in a mortal woman?” [Paul Valéry, “Dance and the Soul,” *Paul Valéry: An Anthology*, ed. Jackson Mathews (Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 299.]



Art & Spirituality in the East and the West

BY SGI PRESIDENT DAISAKU IKEDA

The following is the text of President Ikeda's lecture at the Académie des Beaux-Arts (Academy of Fine Arts) of the Institut de France, on June 14, 1989.

It is a great privilege for me to speak today on “Art and Spirituality in the East and the West” at the Institut de France, illustrious cradle of a 300-year-old tradition. I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to all those to whom I owe this great honor, and in particular to the current president of the Academy of Fine Arts, Mr. André Jacquemin, and to the permanent secretary of the Academy, Mr. Marcel Landowski. I would also like to thank those who, despite the many demands on their time, honor me by their presence.

No doubt many famous men have walked in this room and stood where I am standing now. That stimulates within me an emotion that I find can best be expressed by this poem that I wrote:

*There is a generous spring
That suddenly, from the depths of the sea,
Bursts forth in a powerful tide.*

*Vaster and bluer than an immense lake,
Its sparkling stream runs underground,
Playing a bewitching music.*

*If man can feel this spring,
And know it to be real and pure,
Inexhaustible since ancient times;
If man can draw from
This power of eternal life that engenders
and regenerates,
Then he will have the power to create*



*Free
from any hindrance.*

*This is the source of
the mystery
That bursts forth
from the depths of
the universe.
And this is the
music
That spans the
march of history.*

*Isn't this music, sacred
and magnificent,*

*Also man's inner rhythm
And a universal tongue?
Who would not listen
To the clarity of this symphony
That flows over the waves of life?
Who could not discover
The rhythm that rises from the depths of the soul
And the inexhaustible creative source?*

Since ancient times, art has appeared as a natural, irrepressible manifestation of human spirituality. In its various forms, spontaneously, art has always symbolized a fundamental reality. While it is true that any form of art is personal and limited in terms of space, we can also say that the soul of the artist tends to reunite with, to rediscover, this fundamental reality that one can call universal life. This refers to the substance of life itself, grasped in all its dynamism through a profound fusion between the self (in other words, the microcosm) and the universe (the macrocosm). It is from this fundamental reality that man derives the energy needed for rebirth. It is here that he finds his

reason for being and the axis of his search.

It is generally felt that man needs bread to exist, that his body cannot function without this essential food. Art is to the spirit what bread is to the body: a necessity without which it cannot renew itself. This is what Aristotle referred to when he spoke of catharsis.

We may thus ask ourselves: why does art play such an important role in man's growth and why has this always been so? To me, the major reason seems to lie in art's "Power of synthesis," and in art's capacity to bring together and unify disparate elements. Goethe has Faust say the following in a monologue: "Into the whole how all things blend, / Each in the other working, living!" If at an essential level this is a valid assertion for all beings, art worthy of the name consists in seeking this fundamental reality that creates the link between man and man, man and nature, and man and the universe. The emotion generated by a work of art, be it poetry, painting or music, may be that tangible, unquestionable feeling of a broadening of the self. It is a feeling of fullness, borne from a mysterious rhythm, a kind of flight toward the infinite, lived as a sharing, an exchange, whose source is our interior world.

This power of synthesis, characteristic of art, actualizes itself in the opening of the limited to the unlimited, of individual existence to universal significance. This link with the universal was at one time very much a part of religious rites, and it can also be found in ancient theater. There may not be any significant difference between art and ritual if, as the English author Jane E. Harrison writes: "It is at the out set one and the same impulse that sends a man to church and to the theatre."

I would like to relate an anecdote here, about a famous Kabuki actor who visited Europe a long time ago. During his trip he had the opportunity to view masterpieces of Western art at the Louvre. Asked about his impressions he was content to answer, "One sees Christ throughout." No doubt a somewhat hasty conclusion, but one that conveyed simply his surprise at discovering the considerable influence of the Christian tradition on Western art. That comment is certainly no more than the testi-

mony of a visitor from the East expressing very personal views of Western art, but he was able to discern the fundamental reality through the particular and express it very concisely.

Notre-Dame de Paris, the cathedral at Chartres — are these not the purest expression of Gothic architecture in Europe as well as the actualization of the worldview of the Christian Middle Ages? Art's power of synthesis is indeed astonishing. Art and religion are inseparable. Man, in his passionate quest for a better life, always arrives at this truth.

What about art in the East? An examination of the aesthetic content of Japanese culture shows that it, too, is colored by religious feeling. Paul Claudel understood and explained this, as did André Malraux, with whom I discussed the subject. The nature of religious tradition in Japan may appear to be somewhat ambiguous, compared to the rigorous monotheism of Christianity. Paul Claudel defined the motivation behind the traditional Japanese aesthetic as "the desire to merge with nature rather than dominate it." A few decades later, Mr. Malraux called the same aesthetic "the interior reality." He had, it seems to me, a very clear perception of the religious attitude that links man to the universe and to nature. He has pinpointed the very source of beauty. The tendency toward a fundamental reality has very subtly permeated all of Japanese culture.

In modern times, the decline in the power of synthesis, which art and religion have always expressed, is a problem in the East and West alike. Brilliant minds, foreseeing this difficulty, have been calling attention to it since the end of the nineteenth century. There is no need for me to go into this in detail. But when man breaks his bonds with nature and the universe, his ties with his fellows will also be broken. And then, even isolation will no longer be thought of as a social ill.

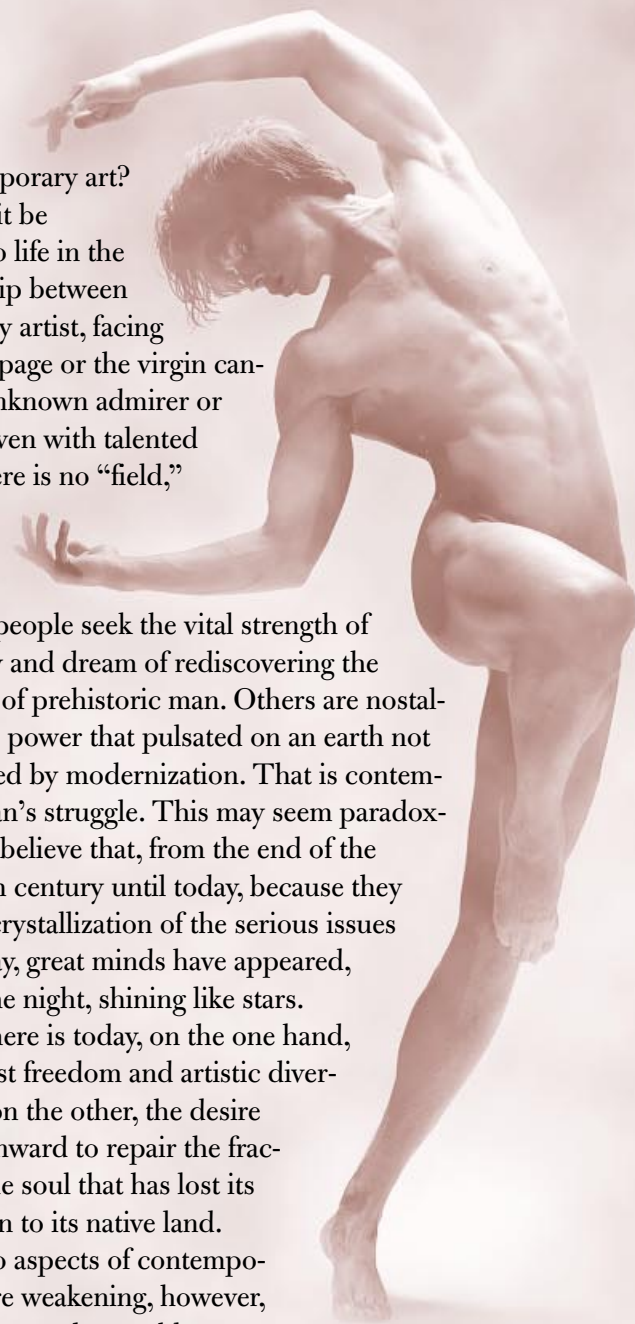
It cannot be denied that the very context of art has changed a great deal. For example, conditions in contemporary art are very different from those in Greek theater, where the audience participated in the plays, sometimes even more than the actors themselves. The question, then: how to exert this power of synthesis, this ability to link, in the context

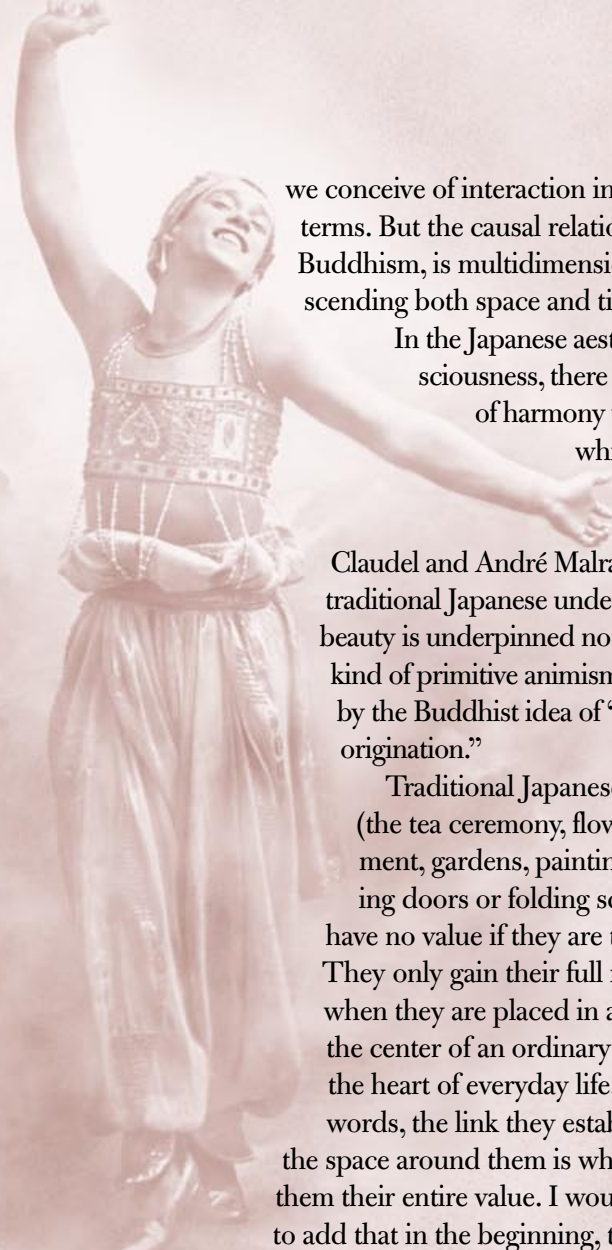
of contemporary art? How can it be brought to life in the relationship between the solitary artist, facing the blank page or the virgin canvas, the unknown admirer or reader? Even with talented artists, there is no "field," no shared physical space.

Some people seek the vital strength of prehistory and dream of rediscovering the hardiness of prehistoric man. Others are nostalgic for the power that pulsed on an earth not yet polluted by modernization. That is contemporary man's struggle. This may seem paradoxical, but I believe that, from the end of the nineteenth century until today, because they were the crystallization of the serious issues of their day, great minds have appeared, lighting the night, shining like stars. Indeed, there is today, on the one hand, the greatest freedom and artistic diversity and, on the other, the desire directed inward to repair the fractures of the soul that has lost its connection to its native land. These two aspects of contemporary life are weakening, however, as is the power that enables us to transcend the visible.

I would like now to substitute what Buddhists call *kechi-en* (a causal relationship, the function that links life to its environment) for the concept of the "power of synthesis."

The concept of causal relationship arises from the theory of "dependent origination," a philosophical construct existing throughout the history of Buddhism, since Shakyamuni's time. This theory holds that every phenomenon, social as well as natural, results from a link with another phenomenon, and that nothing can occur in isolation. In other words, all that comes about is the result of interaction. Usually





we conceive of interaction in spatial terms. But the causal relationship, in Buddhism, is multidimensional, transcending both space and time.

In the Japanese aesthetic consciousness, there is the idea of harmony with nature, which attracted

writers like Paul

Claudel and André Malraux. This traditional Japanese understanding of beauty is underpinned not only by a kind of primitive animism, but also by the Buddhist idea of “dependent origination.”

Traditional Japanese art forms (the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, gardens, paintings on sliding doors or folding screens, etc.) have no value if they are taken alone.

They only gain their full meaning when they are placed in a “field,” in the center of an ordinary space, in the heart of everyday life. In other words, the link they establish with

the space around them is what gives them their entire value. I would also like to add that in the beginning, traditional

forms of Japanese poetry, like renga and haiku, could not have existed without this “field,” without a space where authors could gather.

Buddhism explains the “dependent origination” of all phenomena through the concept of ku (sometimes translated a “void”). The tendency to associate the notion of ku (life in a state of latency) with the notion of nothingness still exists. Buddhism itself is partially responsible for this, particularly Southern, or Hinayana, Buddhism, which arrives at a kind of nihilism by searching for enlightenment through the negation of worldly values. But the concept of ku in Northern, or Mahayana, Buddhism is totally different from the Southern Schools’ static, nihilistic understanding of ku. Northern Buddhism describes a reality that changes from one moment to the next, the

flowing movement of life itself. We may find a parallel in the more familiar tradition of the West, in the philosophy of Bergson, which strives to comprehend life in terms of its continuity.

I am tempted to call this dynamism, this vital energy contained in the state of ku as defined by Northern Buddhism, “creative life.”

A creative life devotes itself entirely to going beyond the individual self by continually transcending the limits of space and time in pursuit of a universal self. In other words, this creative life develops in leaps and achieves renewal each day, in keeping with the original rhythm of the universe.

My conversations with Mr. René Huyghe, of the Académie Française, were published ten (1980) years ago. In them, Mr. Huyghe gave an excellent definition of the heart of Northern Buddhism, which he called “spiritual life,” thus showing his deep understanding of the subject. He states, “We are linked to the creative action of the future, toward which the universe is moving.”

The Lotus Sutra, the quintessence of Northern Buddhism, gives various explanations of the dynamic force of the creative life. It reveals an entity of a totally free life, without limits (from the spatial as well as the temporal point of view), and affirms that this entire existence is contained in a single moment. The first part of the Lotus Sutra teaches that all phenomena are based on a fundamental Law. When we fuse with this Law, all these phenomena are contained in our life in the present moment, and this life permeates the entire universe. In the latter part of the sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha reveals that he has been a Buddha since a very distant past, a past without beginning, and he explains the eternity of life. The past and the future “condense” themselves into the present moment.

This union of one’s life with all phenomena and the condensation of time are what constitute the dynamism of the creative life, free from all hindrances. In our daily lives, drawing on the energy of this creative life enables us to take action endlessly and to progress along our own path of accomplishment.

The remarkable significance of the Lotus Sutra in relation to other sutras is that it dares to seek the

training ground of the “path of the bodhisattva” in the very heart of our present troubled society and to assert that it is in the midst of this reality that one can polish one’s life and forge a universal self that transcends the lesser self.

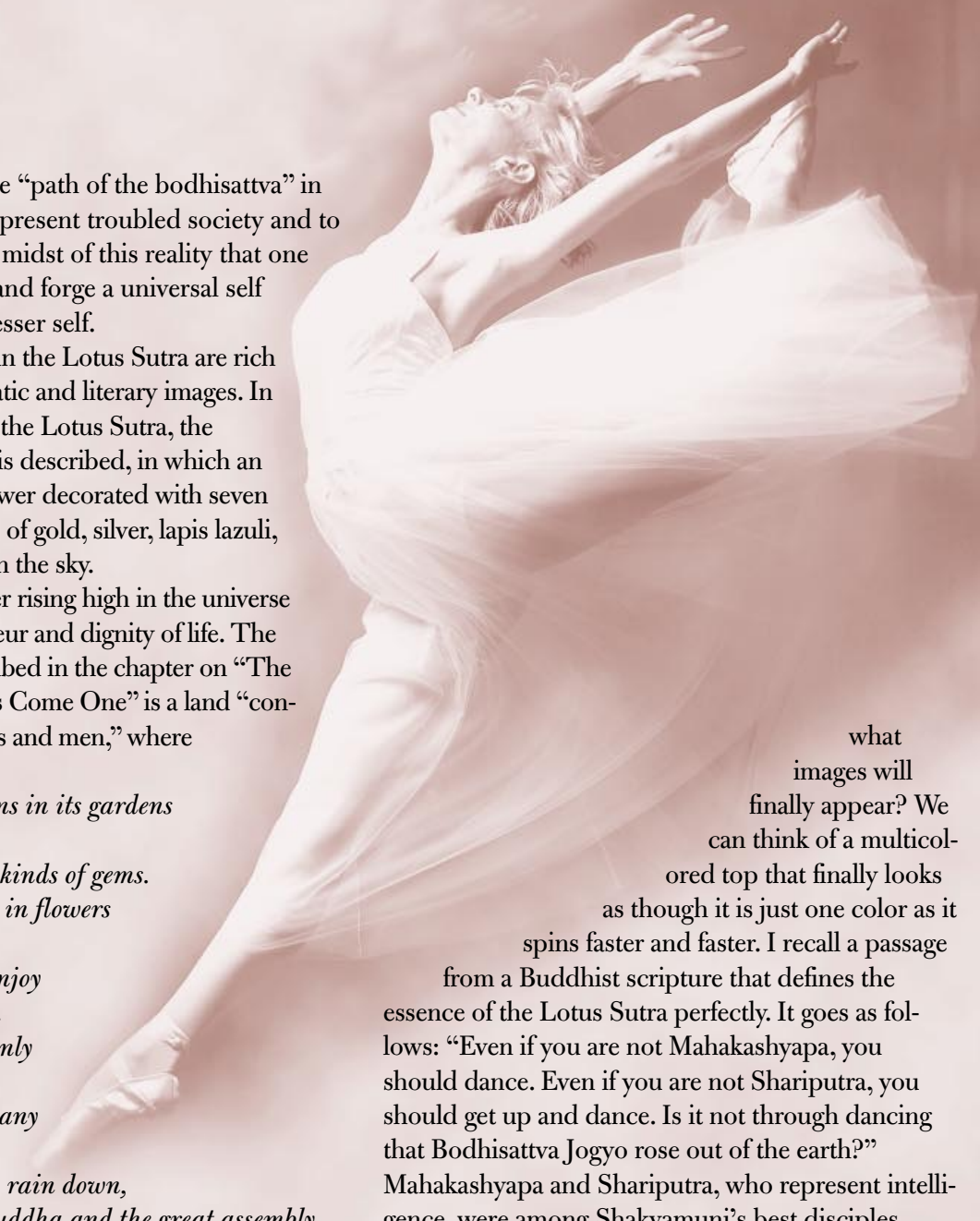
The descriptions in the Lotus Sutra are rich in picturesque, dramatic and literary images. In the middle section of the Lotus Sutra, the Ceremony in the Air is described, in which an enormous treasure tower decorated with seven kinds of jewels (made of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, pearls, etc.) appears in the sky.

This treasure tower rising high in the universe symbolizes the grandeur and dignity of life. The peaceful world, described in the chapter on “The Life Span of the Thus Come One” is a land “constantly filled with gods and men,” where

*the halls and pavilions in its gardens
and groves
are adorned with all kinds of gems.
Jeweled trees abound in flowers
and fruit,
where living beings enjoy
themselves at ease.
The gods strike heavenly
drums,
constantly making many
kinds of music.
Mandarava blossoms rain down,
scattering over the Buddha and the great assembly.*

Painting, music and poetic images vie with each other to evoke a truly wonderful world. Although history often shows us antagonism between art and religion, the Lotus Sutra, with great strength of imagination, shows clearly that art and religion harmonize with and complement each other.

Every dimension of human life (which comprises, according to Kierkegaard, the religious, ethical and aesthetic dimensions) is encompassed in the dynamic development of the creative life as revealed in the Lotus Sutra. When these dimensions are brought into fusion to form what could be called the “cosmic movement,” after repeated sublimation and selection,



what images will finally appear? We can think of a multicolored top that finally looks as though it is just one color as it spins faster and faster. I recall a passage from a Buddhist scripture that defines the essence of the Lotus Sutra perfectly. It goes as follows: “Even if you are not Mahakashyapa, you should dance. Even if you are not Shariputra, you should get up and dance. Is it not through dancing that Bodhisattva Jogyo rose out of the earth?” Mahakashyapa and Shariputra, who represent intelligence, were among Shakyamuni’s best disciples.

In the passage above, the word dance symbolizes the joy they felt upon hearing the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. Bodhisattva Jogyo was at the head of the numerous bodhisattvas whom Shakyamuni, when he expounded the Lotus Sutra, caused to emerge from beneath the earth so as to entrust them with propagating the Law after his death.

I am very moved by the great beauty of the images — “dance,” “get up and dance,” and “through dancing” — which, full of life and energy, are used to describe these bodhisattvas appearing from the earth. This is an excellent way of calling to mind the dynamism of the creative life, which pulses ceaselessly, like the beating of a heart.

What is the meaning of the descriptions in the Lotus Sutra? They have been explained as being figurative descriptions of the movements of an individual life. The expression “through dancing” should thus not be taken to describe an objective fact but rather as a symbol of the creative life. The image of the bodhisattvas springing forth symbolizes joy, but not a simple joy. It is the joy that is supreme among all joys, the joy that is felt in contributing unceasingly to the good of society and in searching deeply for the meaning of a life regulated by the fundamental Law of the universe.

The purity of this symbol reminds me of a beautiful passage by Paul Valéry, where, in dialogue in *Dance and the Soul*, in his inimitable style, he has Socrates say: “...while this exaltation and vibration of life, while this supremacy of tension, and this whirling into the greatest agility humanly possible, have the virtues and powers of flame; and that the shames, the worries, the sillinesses and the monotonous fare of existence are consumed in it, making a shining light in our eyes of what is divine in a mortal woman?”

Admittedly, these two passages, from Valéry and Buddhist literature, are very different sorts of writings. Still, it is interesting to note how our imagination naturally turns to the image of dance when we try to use language to express the purest and ultimate forms of movement.

We live today in a time of difficulty and change unprecedented in human history. In such times, many people look inward — this is quite evident. Paul Valéry, at the end of his life, tried to create a “society of minds.” When we talked together, André Malraux, who was thinking in the same vein, had already foreseen that a spiritual revolution would take place in the coming century. The appearance and

development of a creative life, thanks to inner changes in man, will certainly lead the way to just such a spiritual revolution. I am convinced that this surge in and blossoming of the creative life will also be at the root of the revitalization of all human activities, beginning with art. I would like to conclude with a poem that I composed in honor of art:

*Art,
O eternal light,
Imperishable imprint of civilizations!*

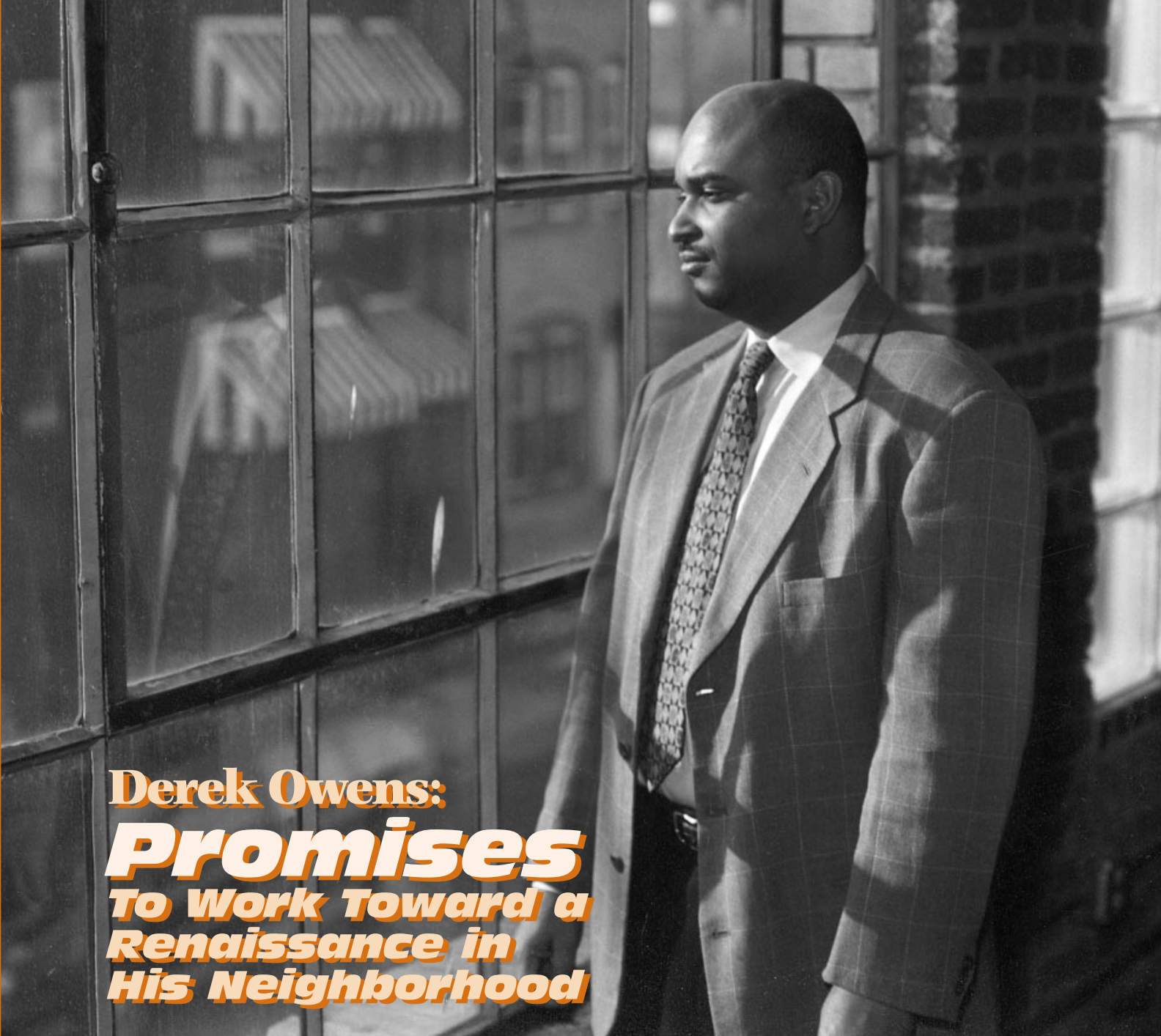
*Hymn to life,
To liberty, to creation, to joy!
Intense prayer,
Profound harmony with
the fundamental reality!*

*Forum of friendship,
Where millions of beings
Join with, greet, and smile
at each other.*

*A man of letters declared in the West:
East is East and West is West,
But when the two giants meet
Boundaries and nationalities will disappear.”*

*At the same time, in the East,
A great poet wrote:
“East and West must marry
On the altar of humanity*

*And here is Art,
Inviting the soul by reaching her hand out
Toward a soothing and serene wood,
Toward a garden where imagination blazes
across the sky;
Inviting it to the noble stage of wisdom
And leading it toward the far-off horizon
Of universal civilization. ❁*



Kathryn Aiken

Derek Owens: **Promises** *To Work Toward a Renaissance in His Neighborhood*

BY ROBIN MEADER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Derek Owens, age thirty-three, has just returned to Washington, D.C., on the train from a business trip in New York. He suggests we meet in the athletic club of the newest hotel in the city, Club L.A. in the Ritz-Carlton. The club's employees seem to know him, and they go to great lengths to seat us in a quiet corner so we can talk about

Derek's life as a businessman and a Buddhist.

"I actually got into the work of being a businessman by mistake; I know nothing's by mistake, but it wasn't planned," he laughs. After he had been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism with the SGI for five years, in his last year of high school he received the Soka Sports Award from SGI President Ikeda. He also became the top-rated tennis player in



Photo by Kathryn Allen

Derek Owens and his wife, Linda, work toward the success of their catering business and nightclub Club 2:K:9, located on U Street in Washington, D.C., and assisting their community.

the Washington Metropolitan Region and earned a scholarship to Hampton University, where he studied economics.

“In the middle of my junior year I decided to transfer to Pennsylvania State University. Penn State wouldn’t take me in the middle of the year, so I came to Howard University, where my high school tennis coach had come before me. At Howard I noticed there were no eateries on Georgia Avenue, just a McDonald’s. I had had a great time down at Hampton in a nice upscale little eatery, so I came up with the idea of opening a café. We approached the University and they said go ahead, go for it. So the next day we were getting ready to open a business.”

It is characteristic of Derek Owens to follow his idea through to its fullest conclusion. Other things grew from the one idea: he now has three businesses — Club 2:K:9, University Citi Caterers, and the nonprofit Positive Partners. The idea grew from his affection for his community, was fed by his confidence that he could make a wonderful product, and survived near-devastation by powerful forces. His dream is to expand his business to embrace more of the historic Howard University neighborhood.

In 1923, Jean Toomer penned *Cane*, commonly considered the first text of the Harlem Renaissance,

right in this neighborhood. Derek Owens’ dream is to extend the renaissance of life, based on Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, to the city block and beyond, to the length of historic U Street, and then to the city itself.

Following a trajectory toward a larger and larger destiny seems natural to a young man who wants to be a good friend to all his employees. He competed so fiercely in tennis when he was twelve years old that he learned how to excel and made tennis his ticket to college by winning tennis scholarships. It seems natural that Derek Owens would go into work that brings him into contact with many other people. It is work that allows him to compete and excel in Washington, D.C., home to many demanding palates and plenty of superior restaurants.

The example of his mother, Brenda Harwood, in business and in faith motivates Derek. His mother told *Living Buddhism* that from a young age — four or five years old — Derek watched her fight for her life by praying before the Gohonzon to beat a dangerous heart ailment. When he was twelve and came to her asking how he could perform better in his tennis matches, she just said, “You know what to do,” and pointed in the direction of the family altar. “When he was a baby, he used to fall asleep with his head on my lap while I chanted hour after hour in front of the Gohonzon,” she explained.

Just as the practice of Buddhism “rubbed off” on Derek from his mother’s practice, so the social ease he feels around people who are active in their communities “rubbed off” on him from Curtis Owens, his father. Derek had success modeled for him by his parents, so he had a strong start in life. When his parents divorced — a situation that could have affected his self-esteem — he hit a low point. But the young men of the SGI showed him examples of success in their own lives, and told him how to make his own dreams come true. The young men taught him how to say out loud what he wanted to accomplish: “Put your goals on the line!” they said. “When you say it out loud and in front of others, you have to do it, you have to follow through.”

When he was twelve, Derek listened to an older young man relate the story of using his faith and

practice to gain the wisdom to earn his first million dollars. Bruce Berger's story continues to inspire Derek Owens, although Bruce never knew until recently the great impact his life story had on the boy. In turn, Derek Owens keeps moving ahead toward larger and larger goals because he hopes others are inspired by his example to do more than they thought they could. "You'd be surprised who's watching you," he notes sagely. Howard University invites him back regularly to lecture to current students about success in business, and he believes he may be inspiring others with his own success.

Mr. Owens continues to be motivated by his own dreams. His café grew to include a catering business, and then a nightclub. "Entertainment is so important," he says, "because it brings people together." While he de-emphasizes the entertainment component of his business when he is downtown at the bank, at the Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee or Board meetings, it's the entertainment that opens doors for him and his dreams for the neighborhood.

In turn, the energy he put into developing his block that changed from a drug-dealing enclave to a resurgent entertainment section of this city opens people up to Buddhism in a natural way. People will say, he projects, that this block, lined with flowers instead of dumpsters, got its start at rejuvenation because of 2:K:9 nightclub, the club with alcohol-free teen nights and daytime Gospel specials. And the owner of that club, you know, he's a Buddhist. It will be as natural for people to observe that about him as it is for people to say it about Tina Turner after reading her book or viewing her movie and feeling encouraged.

The biggest obstacle Derek's business has faced so far has been the breaking of their original lease by Howard University Hotel several years ago. Although the then-Georgia Café did not win its suit against Howard University, and the café finally settled for a six-month extension on the early removal date and payment of court costs by Howard, Derek used the protracted battle — in which he even used the tactic of picketing the [University] president's

house, along with fellow students, to emphasize his point that the café was a vital component of the University community — to win in business by learning several important life lessons.

The difficult time strengthened his desire to show actual proof of the power of his Buddhist practice through changing "poison into medicine." His business went from a storefront café leasing the ground floor of a hotel to Capitol Hill, where he was well situated to begin making business contracts with political events, such as high tea at the Clinton White House. He then moved back to the Howard University neighborhood among his friends and former clientele, where he purchased and renovated an entire building.

Derek learned also from his contest with Howard University how to keep the friendships he'd formed there: by chanting he kept the relationships between the café and the University on a strong personal level, never regarding the dispute as anything more than a decision made at some other level. As a result of Derek's protecting his relationships with the very institution that was oblivious to the fact that its closing of a hotel was hurting his business, the University has been eager to collaborate with Positive Partners, Derek's nascent nonprofit organization, on a scholarship project.

Derek sees his business aiding and assisting in bringing the community together. Mentioned above is the scholarship program through Positive Partners that will benefit one to four students each year. Club 2:K:9 is planning to teach a culinary arts program out of its building for the community wherein people would pay tuition on a sliding scale and learn valuable, employable skills. In addition, 2:K:9 holds free dinners on Thanksgiving and Christmas for neighbors in need, and is catering some local police PST meetings without charge. Derek Owens desires that the organizations he heads be an example in the community of neighborly businesses.

Though Derek enjoys his life as a businessman, it's not all rosy. There are constant frustrations in the business. With 100–150 employees, Derek and his partners have encountered pilfering, the turnover of employees and problems of safety in the neighborhood. As a Buddhist, Derek deals with

these daily challenges by daily chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo — welling up the wisdom to manage his affairs in the best way. As a result, the business has a good core of people to run it. Derek plans to give the staff additional training. He also tries to give them personal attention.

As busy as he is, Derek Owens finds it's easy to get into a rut. He has so many daily concerns of business: real estate development, promotions, operations, the board, the nonprofit branch, and the catering and club businesses themselves — if he were a micro-manager, he could not survive. But Derek Owens is a visionary. He likes to imagine, to dream, to see a big picture. His mother, Brenda, and his wife, Linda Dorsey Owens, like to do the daily work. They take personal pride in doing their parts well, Brenda managing the bar and Linda heading up the catering. Derek will do anything — if a key employee can't come to work he will tend bar, he will set up a catering job. But his passion is planning and growing his business. And to do it well, in all its aspects, he has to “concentrate on making this happen now.”

Right now he is determined every hour of the day to get \$1 million in contracts. He makes specific goals. Each morning his prayers focus on the month, the week, the day that he wants to accomplish something. And he keeps those goals in mind himself, as well as being reminded of them by those he has — as he was taught by the SGI young men years ago — spoken them out loud to.

“It's impossible to do anything of any magnitude by oneself. It's important for one person to be the visionary, but without my mother and wife and stepfather, without Anne Wright to manage the door and José Noyola as head chef, and without all the other employees, there would be no Club 2:K:9.”

Eleven years ago José Noyola took a filthy boat to the United States from Guatemala, intending to go to Chicago but ending up by happenstance knocking on the back door of the Georgia Café, and started working there washing dishes. Now some people consider José Noyola the best chef in Washington, D.C.

Derek marvels at his meeting up with José often, and every now and then reminds José of the great fortune that brought the two young men together.

“How can that happen?” Derek wonders aloud. “We kind of grew up together. José says he's in it for the long run.” Derek wants to be able to offer José something that is worth that kind of commitment. “I can't let José down. One of the things that really motivates me when I think maybe I can't do this is José's commitment. That ignites the fire within me.” Derek promised to succeed in this business. He promised José he would succeed, too. Now when he has doubts, or wakes up asking himself why he is working so hard, he remembers his promise, when he was twenty and José was nineteen, and “a huge part of me does it for José.”

Derek's message to young people who wish for success is straightforward: “[Success] is not complicated. Recently I visited France and met friends of a friend, all young people, and I was surprised to observe that they had no hope for their lives. I would say to them or anyone: ‘Dare to dream, and then put your dream on the line.’ As the SGI young men encouraged me when I was a teenager playing in the Brass Band, ‘Say your dreams out loud.’ When you say something with conviction, you have to follow through. When I vigorously express my goals in front of other people, I'm challenging myself to succeed and those who hear me will also remind me.

“I feel that my mission in life is to give hope to others, to let people expand their dreams, because people who don't even know they had done so have helped me expand my dreams. I thought Bruce knew, these last twenty years, that his experience that day helped me with my business — helped me focus and determine, but he didn't even know until I mentioned it to him last week. My mission is to help people — I don't even need to know about it. So if I can give one, two or three people encouragement and determination, that's great. Of course if it can be millions then that would be even greater. But I think if you can give one person that drive, it's worth it because it changes that person's whole life when you give him or her a little hope, a little determination. A little determination can make someone go out and do something that they never thought they could do.

“Throughout my life, I frequently recited my



Photo by Kathryn Aiken

Derek Owens admits, "It's impossible to do anything of magnitude by oneself," and his staff at Club 2:K:9 takes pride in knowing that he can depend on them. (Above, l-r: José Noyola, executive chef; Anne Wright, general manager; Derek Owens, owner; Jason Conley, building manager; and John Spann, assistant bar manager.)

favorite passage from Nichiren's writing, 'The Opening of the Eyes': 'Foolish people are likely to forget the promises they have made when a crucial moment comes.'" Derek Owens' promise was, "I'm not going to give up."

Derek wants his 2:K:9 special events center to be different from similar facilities in D.C., each of which tends to cater to only one group of people. "I wanted a place where all ethnic groups would feel comfortable and safe." He assembled a diverse marketing team and works together with it to create an environment that reflects the spirit of kosen-rufu. "I have named Saturday night Global Saturdays: on any Saturday night, you will find people from as many as ten different cultures dancing and having a great time."

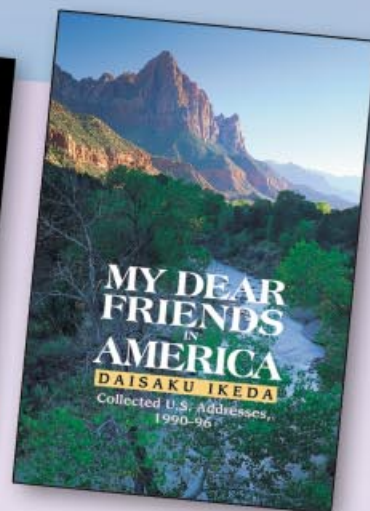
With the goal not only to have a successful special events center, but also to be a model in the community, Derek Owens spends much of his time developing 8th and U Streets, N.W., where his building is located. He and his family are deter-

mined to create peace right where they are: "It is my prayer that our building and 8th Street will exhibit my determination to make a difference. My determination is to have President Ikeda attend a major SGI activity at our facility. I hope he will be proud that he gave me an SGI Soka Award."

In *The Human Revolution*, Daisaku Ikeda writes: "A nation can be changed by the determination of a single individual." Derek Owens has determined to change a community neighborhood and a city through sincere prayer. "I know for sure there will be many more obstacles to confront, but I'm ready. In a recent *World Tribune*, President Ikeda said: 'Kosen-rufu is an eternal struggle. To fight and fight on, right through the end, with the lion-hearted spirit of the Daishonin — this is the hallmark of a truly great life.' I know that I will achieve my goals and that great things are destined for my business and my neighborhood, the U Street Corridor." ☸

Assistance from Lorraine Brown and Michele Chargois

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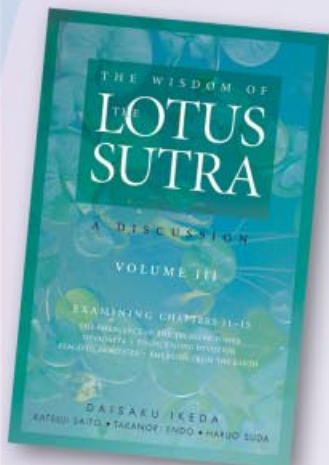
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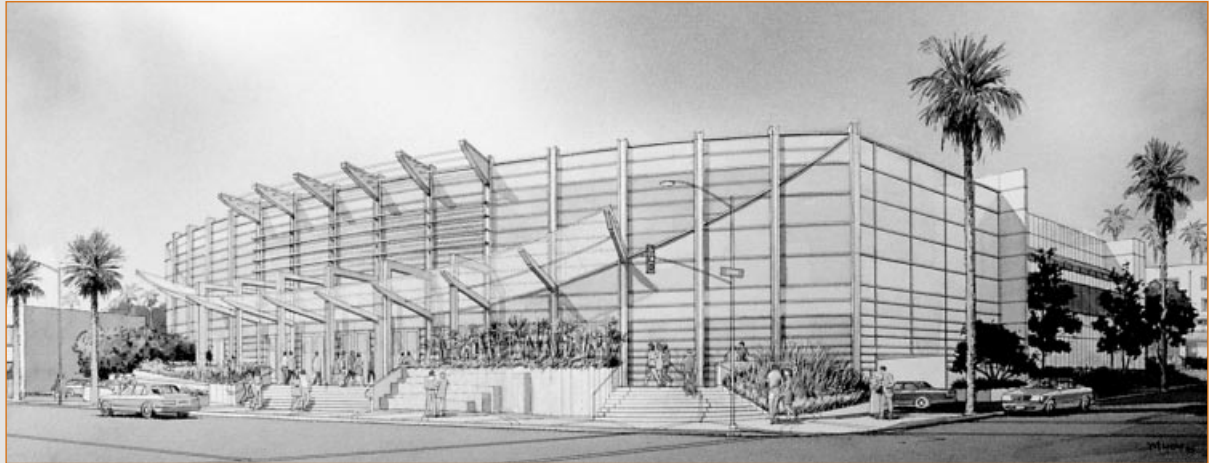
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An architect's drawing of renovations to the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium scheduled to be opened in 2001.

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 165 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.