

King Day Celebrated Nationwide

All over the country, SGI-USA members commemorated Jan. 15, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, by marching in parades, holding seminars and participating in local interfaith events.

In Dallas, despite rain, frigid temperatures and the threat of snow, more than 100 members participated for the fifth straight year in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade. They joined more than 100 different groups to march four miles under the banner "Living the Dream." This year, for the first time, the members con-

structed a float from which they sang "Singin' in the Rain" and waved to the crowd.

SGI-USA member Audrey McClure, who organized the members' participation along with her husband, David, said: "In the five years of participating in this parade, this is the most meaningful because of the beautiful unity the members have shown. No one has complained about the weather at all."

The SGI-USA Culture Department in Washington, D.C., commemorated King Day at a new bookstore in downtown



Photo by ERIC SEAHOLM

SGI-USA members in Dallas join their city's Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade, Jan. 15.

Washington. The combined presentation, dialogue and performance event, "Envisioning Cultures of Peace: Building Sustainable Communities,"

drew more than 135 participants, about a quarter of whom had never attended an SGI event before.

"By engaging our col-

leagues in dialogue about peace on this significant day for peace movements," Region

PLEASE SEE KING, 3

SGI President's Annual Peace Proposal Released

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



Continuing his efforts to promote peace through dialogue, SGI President Ikeda (right) welcomes renowned scientist Dr. Joseph Rotblat at the Okinawa Training Center, February 2000.

On Jan. 26, in commemoration of SGI day — the anniversary of the SGI's establishment in 1975 — SGI President Ikeda's annual peace proposal was released. Beginning in 1983, the SGI leader has submitted a proposal each year to the United Nations outlining his ideas for the establishment of lasting peace throughout the world.

Reaffirming his longstanding support for Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, President Ikeda urges the Japanese people to "breathe new life into and universalize the spirit and principles" of the war-renouncing clause.

In the proposal, President Ikeda criticizes Japan's failure, during the 55-year history of the post-war constitution, to effectively contribute to the

cause of peace. He attributes this to what he terms an "egotistical and ultimately false form of pacifism" that is concerned only with the security of the Japanese people and is blind to the larger concerns of Asia and the world.

Since the "right" to wage war has long been considered a key element of national sovereignty, Japan in this sense has been in a state of "semi-sovereignty" under the post-war constitution. President Ikeda asserts that this should be seen as a forward-looking precedent for the voluntary, partial transfer of national sovereignty to the United Nations. He calls on Japan to take the lead in creating an effective, U.N.-based global security and conflict prevention system.

The proposal also stresses

the key roles of women and civil society organizations in creating the foundations for lasting peace. In addition, it urges a rethinking of development assistance to position people as the participants and protagonists of development, rather than as the passive recipients of aid.

This year's peace proposal is currently being translated into English and will appear in an upcoming issue of *Living Buddhism* magazine. In addition, *For The Sake of Peace*, a book based on President Ikeda's peace proposals, has been published by Middleway Press and will be available in public bookstores in March. A review of the book will appear in the April issue of *Living Buddhism*.

Information courtesy of SGI Office of Public Information.

SGI-India Celebrates 40 Years

On Feb. 4, Bharat Soka Gakkai (SGI-India) celebrated its 40th anniversary in 55 cities throughout the country. In February 1961, SGI President Ikeda journeyed to India, the birthplace of Buddhism. On Feb. 4 of that year, President Ikeda buried a special plaque for peace on the grounds of Buddh Gaya, taking the first step toward fulfilling his pledge to his mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, to spread understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in and repay a debt of gratitude to Asia. The meeting of the South Delhi Chapter included activity reports by emergency relief volunteers on rescue efforts in Gujarat in the aftermath of the devastating Jan. 26 earthquake. In a message, President Ikeda sent his condolences to families and friends who lost loved ones to the earthquake, and his hopes for successful rescue operations and a swift recovery of affected areas.

Russian Newspaper Introduces SGI President's Achievements

The *Rossiskiy Pisatel* (Russian Writer) published an article titled "Dialogue with Nature Exhibit—A Dialogue with the Russian People," which introduces the photography of SGI President Ikeda and his activities to advance peace, culture and education. The author critiques President Ikeda's photography exhibition that took place in May 2000 at the State National Ethnographical Museum in St. Petersburg, writing that the worldwide nature and scenic photographs inspire those

who view them. He further introduces President Ikeda as an advocate of peace and arms reduction, who travels the world to act on his beliefs based on the Buddhist philosophy of humanism that respects the dignity of all life.

Amazon Ecological Research Center To Be Constructed in Brazil

SGI-Brazil will construct a research facility on the grounds of the present Amazon Ecological Research Center in Manaus, Brazil. To be completed in October of this year, the facility will become a hub for promoting environmental education and for revitalizing and preserving the Amazon rain forests. The AERC was established in 1992 in the middle reaches of the Amazon on the outskirts of Manaus for the purpose of protecting the Amazon ecosystem. The center has taken on the difficult task of gathering and preserving the seeds of more than 60 species of economically valuable tropical trees. The center expects to play the role of "seed bank" for the entire Amazon region. Also, based on its research, the center will have a permanent, ongoing exhibit for school children that intelligibly illustrates the Amazon rain forests' contributions to the global ecosystem and ways for humanity to harmoniously coexist with the earth



through non-destructive, sustainable economic development.

SGI-Denmark Celebrates the Opening of the 21st Century

On Jan. 21, approximately 400 SGI-Denmark members and their friends gathered to celebrate the start of the 21st century. The guest speaker, Denmark's Poet Laureate Esther Gress, told the audience that the most wonderful meeting in her life was the one with SGI President Ikeda, with whom she shares a mutual passion for poetry. Ms. Gress expressed admiration for President Ikeda's humanism and affirmed that the people of the world are seeking his philosophy. Vowing to work alongside President Ikeda for the sake of peace with a poetic heart, Ms. Gress urged those attending to succeed his legacy as fighters for peace. SGI-Denmark General Director Masaaki Kamio emphasized in his remarks that sincere dialogue would determine the course of the 21st century.

Human Rights Exhibition Opens in Ravenna City, Italy

The SGI's human rights exhibition, "Toward a Century of Humanity—An Overview of Human Rights in Today's

World," opened Jan. 22 at the Ravenna Provincial Conference Center in Ravenna City, Italy. Many students and city residents have visited the exhibition, which has been warmly received. Ravenna Mayor Vidmer Mercatali resolved to personally work to protect human rights as a citizen of Ravenna. He expressed his hopes that many would come to see the exhibition and heighten their awareness of human rights issues.

New Soka Elementary School Opens in Guangzhou, China

On Jan. 5, the Fang Zhaoling Soka Elementary School was completed in the Fenghuang District, Conghua Village, a suburb of Guangzhou City, China. The school's namesake, the renowned master calligrapher and painter Madam Fang Zhaoling, donated her paintings and calligraphic works for a charity auction to support SGI Hong Kong's education fundraiser. The proceeds of the auction were used to build the school through Project Hope, an educational program of the China Youth Development Foundation, which aims to eliminate illiteracy and foster Chinese youth through building schools in economically disadvantaged areas of China. The completion celebration, held in the school playground, was attended by Madam Fang's eldest son John Meng Sung Fang, deputy mayors of Guangzhou City, educational agency representatives, educators, local citizens and SGI-Hong Kong representatives.

Courtesy of SOKANET
(www.sokagakkai.or.jp)

BUDDHISM IN DAILY LIFE

Prayer in Buddhism

Prayer is central to the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. SGI members often relate experiences of "offering earnest prayer," or "praying from the bottom of my heart." They also speak of having their prayers "answered." What do SGI members mean when they make such statements?

Webster's Third International Dictionary defines prayer as "a solemn and humble approach to Divinity in word or thought, usually involving beseeching, petition, confession, praise or thanksgiving."

In what ways does the Buddhist understanding of prayer accord with this definition, and how does it differ?

Prayer appears to be a universal human activity. There is evidence to suggest that humans

have been engaged in some form of "prayer" since the earliest days of our species. As soon as humans developed a consciousness of their relative powerlessness before the forces of nature, the precariousness of their existence and their own mortality, they no doubt began giving expression to intense feelings of petition, praise or thanksgiving.

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has written that religion grew from prayer; that the sentiment and act of prayer precedes the forms that different religious traditions have since given this primordial human act. Buddhist prayer likewise may be thought of as a focused expression of these same sentiments of yearning, commitment and appreciation. It is, however, distinguished by the fact that Buddhism locates the divine within the life of

the individual practitioner. The purpose of Buddhist prayer is to awaken our innate inner capacities of strength, courage and wisdom rather than to petition external forces.

Also, as in many Eastern spiritual practices, there is an emphasis on a specific physical form of prayer. For practitioners of the Lotus Sutra and the repeated chanting of the phrase Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, the name of the mystic law that lies within all life derived by the Daishonin from the title of the Lotus Sutra. That the chant is audibly intoned expresses that fact that in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism prayer is not a purely meditative turning inward, but an act making manifest inner qualities, bringing them out into the real world.

SGI members direct their

prayer to the Gohonzon, or object of veneration. This is a mandala, a symbolic representation of the ideal state of Buddhahood, or enlightenment, in which all the tendencies and impulses of life—from the most debased to the most noble—function in harmony toward happiness and creativity. The Gohonzon is not an "idol" or "god" to be supplanted or appeased but a means for reflection and a catalyst for inner change.

SGI members are encouraged to make their prayers specific, concrete and focused on the real-life problems, hopes and concerns they confront. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism stresses the inseparability of "earthly desires" and enlightenment. The Daishonin states that it is by burning the "firewood" of our desires—through the act of prayer—that we are able to bring forth the flame of renewed energy and the

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PLEASE SEE DAILY LIFE, 3

FROM KING, I

Culture Department Director Kathleen Dockett stated, “we hoped to foster a sense that ‘the power of one’ person creates the change needed to bring about a peaceful world.”

The holiday gathering met in a public setting and also included Buddhist and non-Buddhist professionals on the main panel as well as in the audience. The result was an afternoon of stimulating dialogue, thought-provoking presentations, and joyful entertainment.

The program included a panel of youthful Culture Department members Witney Rose, Ariana Bock, Wen-Shing Ho, Savita Krishnamurthy and Steve Harvey, representing the professions of medicine, education, artistic work (film), law, and scholarly research (biotechnology), respectively. Each has transformed a harsh aspect of his or her work into a way to create unique value for their professions. For example, Steve Harvey works for the U.S. Army, but creates environmentally friendly ways to detoxify chemicals.

Together, SGI-USA members, colleagues and friends emerged from the relaxed, community setting in this new bookstore with expanded ideas about ways to create peace and with refreshed

views of how each individual can contribute to that process.

Members in Long Beach, Calif., joined in the planning of their local Martin Luther King Interfaith Celebration, which was titled “Hope for the 21st Century.” More than 350 people attended the annual event at the Gospel Memorial Church of God in Christ, which included a keynote address from Rabbi Steven B. Jacobs, a highly respected civil rights activist, and performances from many community groups.

Cory Joseph, an SGI-USA young men’s division member, served as the event’s master of ceremonies. The SGI-USA’s Victory Over Violence exhibit was set up in the church lobby, and many attendees signed the VOV pledge.

In Fort Walton Beach, Fla., members built a float that was awarded first prize in their local King Day parade, which drew about 1,000 spectators. In addition, the *Northwest Florida Daily News* ran a front-page photo of the SGI-USA Gulf Coast Area Korean Dance Troupe performing for the festivities.

Dayton, Ohio, members also marched in their community’s parade, joining more than 3,000 others in celebrating Dr. King’s legacy. Thirty-five members marched behind the banner



SGI-USA member Donna Hinton joins civil rights activist Rabbi Steven B. Jacobs in front of the Victory Over Violence exhibit in Long Beach, Calif., Jan. 14.

“Soka Gakkai International—Buddhists for Peace, Education and Culture.”

In Philadelphia, SGI-USA members helped support the Martin Luther King Jr. Association for Nonviolence’s 19th annual benefit luncheon. The late Dr. King’s eldest son, Martin Luther King III, gave the keynote speech. He mentioned to the local members

his admiration of SGI President Ikeda and the Victory Over Violence project.

“I am so pleased that the participation of SGI-USA members in these events around the country has been increasing over the years,” said Al Albergate, SGI-USA director of community relations. “Two things make this especially gratifying: First, the ini-

tiative is coming from the grass roots. And second, I believe this is a direct response by our members to the human rights issues embodied by Martin Luther King Jr.”

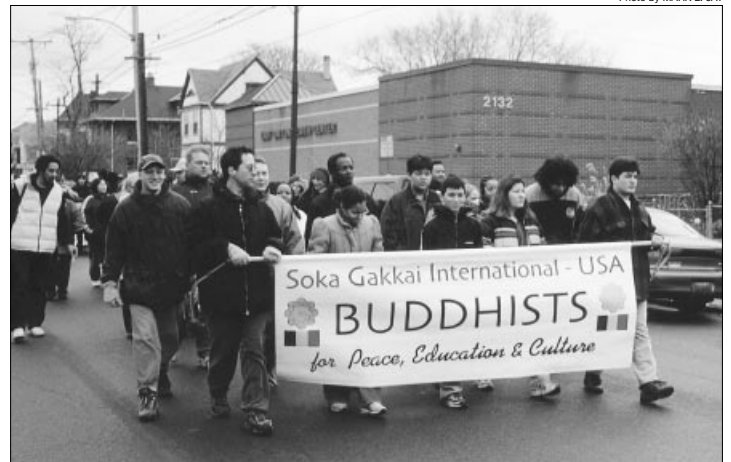
From reports by Troy Murrain, Vincent Hodge, Donna Hinton, Savita Krishnamurthy, Mark L. Jay, Frank Hatcher and Al Albergate.

Photo by FRANK HATCHER



Members in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., cheer from their float in their community’s King Day parade.

Photo by MARK L. JAY



Members of Dayton, Ohio, Chapter represent the SGI.

FROM DAILY LIFE, 2

light of our inner wisdom. Buddhist prayer is the process by which our intensely felt desires and sufferings are transformed into compassion and wisdom. In this sense, it inevitably involves self-reflection, including a sometimes painful confrontation with our own deeply rooted destructive tendencies. To quote

Nichiren Daishonin again, “Your mastery of the Buddhist teachings will not relieve you of mortal sufferings in the least unless you perceive the nature of your own life.”

Most fundamentally, prayer is the process of bringing forth the supreme state of life referred to as our “Buddha nature.” A potential possessed equally by all people, the Bud-

dha nature is the fundamental, compassionate life force inherent in the cosmos. Prayer is the process of realigning our individual lives (the lesser self, with all its impulses and desires) with the rhythm of the living cosmos (the greater self). In doing this, we unleash previously untapped sources of self-knowledge, wisdom, vitality and perseverance. And because,

in Buddhist philosophy, there is no separation between the internal world of human beings and their environment, changes that occur in our inner life are reflected in our external circumstances. The experience of having one’s prayers “answered” is the manifest result of this process.

Daisaku Ikeda has written that the ultimate form of prayer

is in fact a vow — a vow to contribute to the happiness of others and the development of human society.

It is this vow and pledge to action that most profoundly attunes our lives to the larger life of the universe and brings forth our highest, most noble “selves.”

Courtesy of SGI Quarterly

EXPERIENCE — JONI HERMAN, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIF.

The Art of a Mentor

Joni Herman finds mentoring at-risk kids brings new meaning to her art.

I was born in Venice, Calif., but my parents moved to Europe to study painting when I was 6 months old. I had a unique upbringing in Italy because I spent my childhood until age 12 in the studios of the most prominent Florentine artists of the day. My mother was one of five protégés of Pietro Annigoni — a true maestro of portraiture — whose clients included Queen Elizabeth, Pope Paul and John F. Kennedy.

In lieu of television, I spent most days painting under the mentoring of my parents. At an early age, I learned the value of having a maestro or mentor in life.

Though I appreciated the culturally rich experience my parents afforded me, life was not easy. Due to my parents' dedication to mastering their art, our family was poor. I literally grew up on the streets of Florence, Italy, eating scraps from people's plates and sitting at the curb with my mother and her paintings in the hopes of selling a painting, often relying on people's

generosity to buy food.

When we moved back to the United States, my mother, who feared that life as a painter was too financially unstable, influenced me to develop a more practical profession. So I became a secretary to earn a living.

At 19, I began to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism within the SGI-USA. I had lived through a drug overdose and was hospitalized for four months in Europe. My practice of Buddhism was the reason I was able to live a normal life and overcome what doctors told me was irreversible damage to my nervous system.

Early on in my practice in 1985, I had an opportunity to attend an exchange meeting with SGI President Ikeda that was life changing. Even though I had a second chance at life, I felt an overwhelming sense of futility and despair. My life was so difficult and there didn't seem to be a reason to fight so hard just to exist. When I encountered Daisaku Ikeda, I felt I had met a human being that was living passionately for the happiness of other people. I knew I had found a new mentor — not just a mentor in the art of painting, but a mentor of life itself.

As I continued to chant, I developed tremendous drive and energy, which helped me

resurrect my dream of being an artist. I challenged the intimidation I felt in the face of my parents' incredible talent and the fear of not being able to survive financially.

It took many years, but I managed to commit to following my heart and pursue a career as a fine artist. In 1995, at 32, I developed a very successful faux finishing and mural business with 30 full-time employees. I worked extensively in the homes and offices of celebrities such as Milton Berle, Rod Stewart, Kenny G. and Steven Spielberg.

I found myself focusing more and more on making money, while the vision I had of being a great human being like President Ikeda started to diminish. I realize now that I tried to fill the void in my life where so much shame and feelings of worthlessness existed from growing up in poverty. The more I pursued this path, the stronger my pangs of need became and the less satisfied I was with my accomplishments. It all started to feel pointless. Here I was 10 years later, so successful, yet with the same lack of worth for my life.

I worked seven days a week and all my energy was spent managing employees. I never painted. I wasn't an artist any more, and no longer had a vi-



Joni Herman offers more than art education to her young students at the Santiago Creek Day School — she offers a second chance at life.



José Simon, 17, and Alberto Gomez, 16, discover their artistic talents through painting under Joni Herman's mentoring.

sion for my life's work or my purpose as a human being. I finally realized I was miserable.

That's when an employee I was sponsoring for a green card faked an injury and filed a lawsuit against me. It cost me a lot of money to defend myself, and I ended up filing for bankruptcy. At the same time, my boyfriend left me, I lost my house, my vehicle, and all hope.

Depression consumed me for nearly a year.

Though I continued to participate in SGI-USA activities, I remained on the fringe of the organization. During this time, many people tried to encourage me but my attitude was "I heard that before" and "This practice works for everybody else but me." But the days I spent studying the writings of Nichiren Daishonin paid off because this gave me the wisdom to recognize my negativity. I decided the only way I knew how to change my life was through total commitment to my Buddhist practice.

Since I hadn't taken responsibility in the SGI-USA for a few years, I chanted with what sincerity I could muster to contribute wholeheartedly within the organization. I began volunteering with the stage crew in the art department for an up-

coming youth festival in Los Angeles in 1999.

During this time, I determined to find something meaningful to create with my life since I knew how transient everything was. A new sense of purpose emerged as I read the following guidance from President Ikeda: "Leo Tolstoy asserts: 'An immortal soul requires a task as immortal as itself. And just such a task is assigned to it: endless striving after perfection of self and the world.' How true this is! The struggle to develop ourselves and make the world a better place is what makes our lives immortal. There are those who have no solid philosophy to guide them in life, and they have no interest in seeking one. ... Ballsagun entreats: 'A person who does not work for others is as if in the grave. Don't be a dead person! As long as you have strength, work for others!'" (*World Tribune*, Sept. 24, 1999, p. 4).

I realized I had lost my sense of mission over the years. The spirit described above is what I had witnessed in President Ikeda when I first met him, and it is what gave me hope to go on living. I wanted to follow his example.

In January 2000, I attended a

meeting in Japan with President Ikeda. At this meeting, he said, "In the realm of human beings, there is nothing as beautiful or as strong as the bond between mentor and disciple." Seeing him again reminded me of our first meeting. It helped me challenge the lack of value I felt in my life; I felt I could try again. After the meeting, I wrote him a letter expressing my promise to fulfill his guidance to support the youth.

Shortly after returning from my trip, I started chanting to work with youth in trouble. I shared my desire with many friends and clients until I met a client who was a counselor for at-risk youth. I began a volunteer art program one day a week at the Santiago Creek Day School, a probationary school where students age 13 to 18 are often sent when expelled from regular school.

There are approximately 40 students of all grade levels in each class. The first day of class I chanted so intensely I thought I would burst. I wanted to provide an opportunity for these at-risk youth to use art to express their deepest pain and disappointments and was terrified I wouldn't be effective.

The first day we were going to start a mural, a 3-month project. The kids looked tough and intentionally disregarded me. At the end of the day, I told the teacher how I had chanted and how terrified I was of what I had taken on. She laughed affectionately and patted me on the back.

Every day I prayed from the bottom of my heart for the happiness of each student and faculty. I prayed to benefit even one student through my efforts. Though I had no teaching experience, I was determined to reach their humanity and get beyond their mistrust.

The following week, I noticed a new boy with a shaved head sitting by himself. He looked depressed and gave off a "don't come near me" vibe. José had an exceptional artistic ability. When I asked him if he painted at home he said he didn't have materials. So I brought him paint, brushes and a pad to take home the following week. When I gave him the art supplies, José immediately transformed, smiling from ear to ear. I could now see the beautiful innocence in his heart.

As I got to know Jose, I learned that he had missed a full year of school because he went to work to help support his family of nine kids. The Santiago Creek Day School was José's last chance to graduate from high school.

A few months later, I got involved in another SGI-USA culture festival in Orange County. I invited José and another boy, Alberto, from class to come help out. I put them in charge of designing and laying out all three 12-foot x 20-foot stage backdrops. Each weekend and some evenings for two months, José and Alberto came to our community center to paint. Respecting their Catholic beliefs, I explained to them about our Buddhist practice and said that I didn't expect them to chant. I only wanted them to have the experience of working on the stages.

They were so enthusiastic. Each week, Alberto would wait for 45 minutes outside to make sure he didn't miss getting picked up to go to the community center. After the third week, José asked me about chanting and has been chanting ever since. I prayed each day for both of their happiness.

The three stages turned out beautifully and of professional quality. I had invited a friend of mine to attend the festival who owns the finest animation school in Los Angeles. He was so taken by José's story and the beautiful stages that he gave José a full scholarship to his school.

Since José started practicing his inner life has completely transformed. He has developed so much hope and confidence, which is evident in his huge beaming smile. José will begin his second semester of studying character design soon. His mother was so overwhelmed with the actual proof of his chanting that she also began chanting and so did his 15-year-old sister, Alicia. I am soon to become godmother to José's 5-year-old sister. I feel like I am part of their family. They are so wealthy with love.

I was so touched when recently José said, "I always wanted to be a famous artist, but now I also want to be a mentor like President Ikeda."

Working with these young people at the Santiago Creek Day School for the past year has become the substance and meaning that repalced my sense of futility. We are currently creating a series of six 8-foot x 16-foot murals of underwater sea life to be permanently installed around the pool at the Newport Beach YMCA, along with a plaque of all of their names. My vision is that these students will begin to transform the way they view themselves in relationship to society. I believe any hostility they may feel to-



The students of Santiago Creek Day School are painting several murals for the Newport Beach YMCA. (L-r: Amanual, 18; Stephanie, 18; José, 17; Joni Herman; Alberto, 16; and Ricky, 14.)

ward society is really only a frustration of their not knowing how to be a part of it—a feeling I've had to challenge and overcome myself. I want them to be recognized for their efforts and feel proud of contributing from their hearts.

The feedback I've received about my art program has been very positive. Cyndie Borkoman, the teacher in charge of the

school, told her supervisors that the artist who comes once a week has been chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo for us and it is transforming our school. She calls me their school's angel. Also, on Feb. 13 I was presented with the 2001 Spirit of Volunteerism Award on behalf of the Orange County Department of Education for my efforts. Though I'm busy with work, I'm

committed to continuing to work with youth. In fact, my new determination is to open an art school for at-risk kids.

In addition, my mural business is now growing to the same success I had before, only I don't have employees. There is such a demand for my work that I'm booked for several months. And I'm doing what I love, which is painting. **WV**

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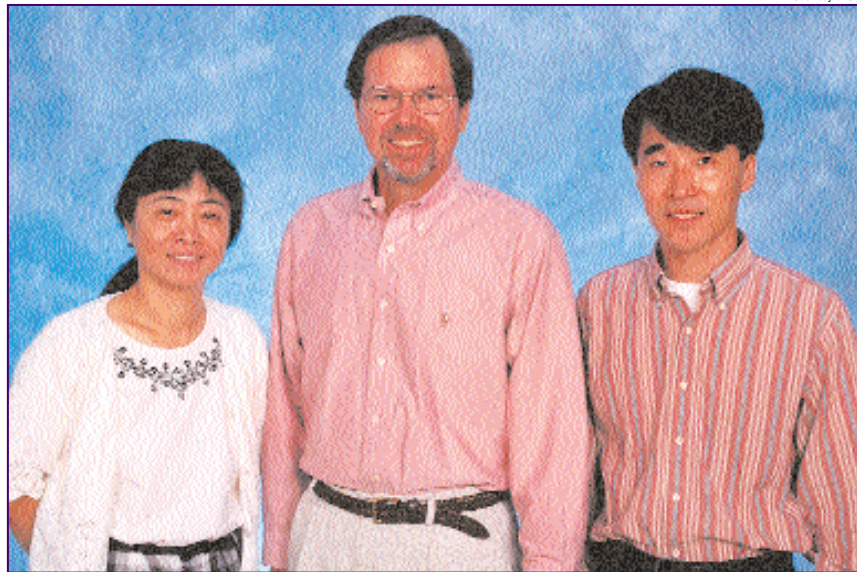
Introducing SUA's International Studies Concentration Faculty

By PAUL R. CARBAJAL
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Students who earn a Liberal Arts degree with an International Studies concentration at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo will not only gain a valuable understanding of today's global arena but will also acquire a deep appreciation for the world's various cultures and their interplay on the global stage.

The International Studies concentration will also allow students the opportunity to examine regional issues as well as the study of specific nations. The curriculum provides students with substantive knowledge zeroing in on ethical considerations, universal human rights and the peaceful resolution of various human conflicts throughout the world.

"These courses are designed to allow the students to learn about particular countries, geographical regions of the world, and global process and



(L-r) Hong-yi Chen (Economics), Peter M. Sanchez (Latin American Studies) and Dongyoun Hwang (Asian Studies)

issues," says Peter M. Sanchez, Latin American Studies professor. "The International Studies courses provide students with a foundational un-

derstanding of their world in order to make them highly informed global citizens."

The students who make International Studies their pri-

mary concentration take at least five courses principally in regional and global studies. They also take classes in country studies designed to

help them understand specific countries other than the United States or their country of birth. The curriculum goes even further to expose the limitations and the increasing importance of transitional issues and process. Students examine the effects of globalization on the environment, resource distribution, social organization and human rights. The faculty hopes this exposure will open the door for students to better position themselves to search for solutions to regional and global challenges making it possible for them to lead contributive lives.

"The country studies courses can encompass any and all disciplines and/or topics which explore in detail a particular nation or ethnic group," notes Dongyoun Hwang, Asian Studies professor. "But all together, these courses will also serve as a preparation for students' careers in scholarship, diplomacy, business, education and even law." WT

A GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING...

Named scholarship endowments can be established at Soka University of America.

By WENDY HARDER
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

When Ed Asawa's beloved wife, Hidoko, passed away, he and his family wanted to do something special to celebrate her life and love of education. They decided to set up a named scholarship endowment at Soka University of America in her honor, which will provide an annual schol-

arship awarded each year in her name.

Named scholarships at SUA start at the \$20,000 donation level, but families or groups may establish one with an initial smaller donation and contribute to the fund, as they are able. When the fund reaches the \$20,000 level, scholarships from the interest generated by the fund will begin to be awarded.

"We established the Hi-

deko H. Asawa Memorial Scholarship Fund gradually with donations from our family and friends," notes Ed's son Arch, who is vice president for administrative affairs at the Aliso Viejo campus. "We knew that this gift exemplified our mother's warm heart and love for young people and education... and it is a gift that will keep on giving to students in need for generations to come." WT



- The art gallery wood floor has been installed in Founders Hall.
- Installation of the variegated tile roof is almost complete on the recreation complex.
- The athenaeum Reception Center garden is being installed.
- The bleachers overlooking the Olympic-size pool are complete.
- Final grading work on soccer/baseball/softball fields has started. WT

SUA, Aliso Viejo Invites You to Family Tour Day, May 5

If you have been looking for a chance to see the new SUA, Aliso Viejo campus, May 5 is your chance. SUA's staff and faculty will be on hand to answer questions and assist with self-guided walking tours that will give parents, students and interested friends and neighbors a chance to go inside key buildings.

Here is the schedule:

9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Self-guided Walking Tours (SUA provides the map!)

11:00 a.m.
Student and Parent Q-and-A session

Noon
Barbecue Lunch (\$5 reservation required) — or bring your own!

2:00 p.m.
Student and Parent Q-and-A session

3:00 p.m.
Ice Cream Social

SUA Family Tour Day Reservation Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Number of other people attending with you? _____

How many prospective students will be in your group? _____

Lunch reservations requested (at \$5 a person)
(Please enclose a check made out to Soka University for this amount.)

Will anyone in your group need special assistance for the tour? _____
If so, please let us know how we can assist you:

Please return to:

Family Tour Day Reservations
Soka University, Aliso Viejo
1 University Drive
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

JOIN THE CLASS OF 2002 AT SUA, CALABASAS

Now in its seventh year, Soka University of America's graduate school in Calabasas, Calif., is accepting applications for its master's degree program in second and foreign language education for the 2001–02 academic year.

of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 600 (on a paper-based test) or 250 (on a computer-based test) and a Test of Written English (TWE) with a minimum score of 5.0.

Applications for the 2001–02 academic year are due by April 30. For more information, contact the Graduate Admissions Office at 26800 West Mulholland Highway, Calabasas, CA 9102. Telephone (818) 878-8717, e-mail: grad_admissions@soka.edu.

Individuals seeking admission to the MA program must hold a bachelor's degree with a minimum grade-point average (GPA) of 2.7 or B- on a four-point scale. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a Test

Soka University, Aliso Viejo Staff and Faculty Move On Campus!

By WENDY HARDER
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

After six years of working out of temporary offices during the planning and construction of SUA's new campus in Aliso Viejo, staff and faculty have moved their offices into the Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda Library.

"It's exciting for everyone to really be on campus," says Daniel Habuki, Ph.D., president of Soka University of America. "Although many of our staff and faculty will be moving one more time into

other buildings as they are completed, this move puts us one step closer to our reason for being...welcoming our first students on Aug. 24."

Our permanent address is the same that we have been using: Soka University, Aliso Viejo, 1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656. And our toll free number for Admission and Financial Aid information is the same: (888) 600-SOKA. But our office phone numbers have changed. Our new main number is (949) 480-4000. Our new fax number is (949) 480-4001. **WT**



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Peace Fest Brings Portland Together

By **RANDEE SCHMIDT**
PORTLAND, ORE., CORRESPONDENT

A Peace Fest, co-sponsored by SGI-USA and the Oregon Peace Institute, was an all-afternoon event held at Portland State University on Feb. 3. Nineteen like-minded community organizations participated, along with guest speakers, films, music, workshops and circle dances.

In his message to the event, SGI President Ikeda said, "Thanks to all the members for this significant step forward."

The event coincided with the Portland showing of the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition. Local members wanted to create an opportunity to share the SGI's vision with their community.

Several local group representatives attended planning meetings at the SGI-USA Portland Community Center. "Through these meetings I learned that diverse groups could sit down together, put aside their differences, and accomplish our common goal of peace," said Barry Lince, an SGI-USA young men's division member.

Those who attended the Peace Fest were able to see eight panels of the Pauling exhibition, originally assembled for the U.S. Congress and displayed in



Jim Cheek (left) and Obo Addy, both SGI-USA members, perform traditional Ghanaian music.

Washington, D.C., which trace Dr. Pauling's life and accomplishments as a scientist, teacher and humanitarian.

The 19 supporting organizations, each advocating unique approaches and solutions to counteract violence and instill peace, were arranged around tables to disseminate their information and resources. Among them were the War Resisters League, Help Increase the Peace of Oregon, Amnesty International, Association for Communal Harmony in Asia,

Multicultural Resource Center, City Repair Project, Oregon Uniting and the Alternatives to Violence Project.

Their mandates all had common threads: public education and dialogue, conflict resolution, opposition to war, strengthening connections and friendships, and bringing together all cultural, ethnic, economic and racial heritages in a spirit of tolerance and trust.

The Middle East Peace Quilts, an international community art project involving

300 Palestinians and Israelis living in North America, created a multicolored backdrop to each group's exhibit. Yehudah Winter, project director, offered that "each square in the 30 quilts was created by a different individual with their unique vision of peace."

The ballroom was lit by the SGI-USA's bright Victory Over Violence exhibit, impactful in its rich design with the energy and passion of youth. SGI-USA members carried out earnest discussions with community groups and citizens eager to learn how to make a difference for peace in society today. Guests were heard to exclaim: "Wow! Your video is so great!" and "Where have you guys been?"

After enjoying the displays, the guests assembled for the formal program, which began with words by Rob Gould, co-founder of the Oregon Peace Institute.

Richard Yoshimachi, SGI-USA Vice General Director, then spoke about the Pauling Exhibit. "The exhibition has received tremendous support from the scientific and academic community," he said. "I really hope that you will all take this opportunity to learn more about Dr. Pauling, and make a personal commitment to develop compassion toward other people for the betterment of the world."

Those assembled then broke up into groups to attend one of four workshops: Compassionate Listening, facilitated by Building Bridges for Peace; a film presentation, *A Journey Towards Peace*, sponsored by Oregon Uniting; Victory Over Violence / Help Increase the Peace, led by SGI-USA member Lisa Harris Craner, along with the American Friends Service Committee; and the Girls' Initiative Network workshop, facilitated by SGI-USA member Kathy Wertz.

The enthusiasm for the Peace Fest was clearly evident in the shining eyes of the youth who worked hard behind the scenes to make this event a success. Lisa Craner felt that the Peace Fest was a steppingstone for SGI-USA in Oregon. "It has enabled us to grow as an organization," she said. "Here we have joined with the community in our efforts to respect diversity and promote Victory Over Violence in all areas of our lives."

SGI-USA member Leah Stenson commented: "This is the manifestation of all our efforts working together. It has set the groundwork for more Portland organizations to carry out joint efforts in the future. As great organizations pull together and join forces, they will be more effective." **WT**

SGI-USA Celebrates Chinese New Year

By **JAMIE LIPTAN**
STAFF WRITER

On Jan. 28 at East Los Angeles College, a celebration was held in commemoration of Chinese New Year, the beginning of the 4,699th year of the Chinese calendar. Similar SGI-USA events were held in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Honolulu and Washington, D.C., to open the Year of the Snake.

In his message to the gatherings, SGI President Ikeda encouraged the participants to devote themselves to their Buddhist practice. "Those with a devout, consistent practice," he said, "will attract fortune from 10,000 miles away."

In Los Angeles, more than 800 people enjoyed the seventh annual celebration. After the presentation of gifts from President Ikeda, SGI-USA Senior Vice General Director Frank



Members perform a dragon dance at the Chinese New Year Celebration, held Jan. 28 at East Los Angeles College.

Nakabayashi expressed his appreciation for the Chinese members' "continuous contributions to SGI-USA's advancement while always providing colorful Chinese culture in our diverse organization. Because of your effort, we are so

fortunate to be able to witness the opening of the Soka University of America and welcome this new century together with President Ikeda."

Then it was on to the performances, which included many traditional dances, two choruses,



A women's chorus sings in celebration of the Year of the Snake, the 4,699th year of the Chinese calendar.

a poem and a moving experience.

This year's event was planned primarily by youth. "This new generation of bilingual youth," said Mr. Nakabayashi, "will be crucial in our movement's advancement in the Chinese-American

community in the 21st century."

For more information on SGI-USA's Chinese-language Group, please contact Frank Nakabayashi by telephone at (310) 260-8961, by fax at (310) 260-8918 or by e-mail at fnakabayashi@sgi-usa.org. **WT**

Atlanta Hosts Children's Rights Exhibition

By DIANE HOLOWAY
ATLANTA CORRESPONDENT

The opening ceremony of the "Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities" exhibition in Atlanta was hosted by Morehouse College and held Jan. 18 at the school's Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel. Atlanta was the exhibition's first stop this year and 22nd overall since its debut in 1996.

The event was attended by more than 150 people, including Morehouse College President Walter E. Massey, Chapel Dean Lawrence E. Carter, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima and many Morehouse students, SGI-USA members and friends of both.

Dr. Marian Wright Edelman gave the ceremony's keynote address. As the founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, she has become one of the nation's strongest voices for children and families. She reminded the audience that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. taught that our choice is not between



Dr. Marian Wright Edelman (left), president of the Children's Defense Fund, shares her thoughts on children's rights.

violence and nonviolence, but nonviolence and nonexistence.

She cited the technological advances of the 20th century, but noted a missing element. "Our scientific and military progress

haven't been accompanied by comparable moral progress, especially in raising children," she said. "Don't have children until you're ready to support them emotionally and financially for a lifetime."

Referencing the importance of the exhibition's message in his remarks, Dean Carter said: "If we are to anchor heaven on earth, we have to care for children. If we can't care for chil-

dren, we can't be heavenly."

Barron Segar, Southeastern director of UNICEF, praised the exhibition and urged the audience to do even more. "UNICEF works with the poorest children in the poorest countries," he explained. "One of the most pressing current needs is to care for more than 28 million children orphaned by AIDS."

Talia Witherspoon, a senior in early childhood education at Clark College, said of the exhibition: "It's very creative and inventive. What stands out to me the most are the children's quotes. It makes you think about what's going on in the world concerning children, especially in the United States. We have great emphasis on education and quality of schools, but we are failing to address such basic needs as the importance of nutrition in schools."

The exhibition ran at Morehouse College through Feb. 3. Its next stop will be Houston in May. For more information on the history of the exhibition, visit the exhibition's Web site at www.kidsrights.org. **WT**

AFRICAN CULTURE FESTIVAL KICKOFF HELD IN LOS ANGELES

By DEBORAH GOODWIN
LOS ANGELES CORRESPONDENT

On Jan. 21 at the SGI-USA's Los Angeles Friendship Center, the African Events Organizing Committee held a kickoff toward an all-day festival celebrating African arts and culture scheduled for April 8 in Los Angeles.

With approximately 150 members in attendance, the meeting combined faith encouragement with a program exhibiting traditional African music, native dress, dance and poetry.

Beginning with the Bata, an ancient sacred drum played by the Yoruba people in Nigeria, guests and members were immediately drawn into the age-old wonder and skilled execution of drummers Lorenzo De Jesus, Rahsan and Charles Miller. This was followed by the Cora—used by the Jallies, ancient storytellers of the Malinke people of

West Africa—which produces a magical harp-like quality as played by Prince Diabate. The performance on this instrument elicited a spontaneous, delightfully synchronized call and response from the audience.

Greetings in the African lan-

guages Yoruba, Swahili and Amharic introduced the presentational section of the program, which included "Prologue" by Nigerian poet Ochia Ofeimun, performed by Michael Williams. A video of SGI President Ikeda's meetings

with African leaders was also shown, a visual experience of the wide-reaching impact of human exchange.

Completing the offerings of represented African culture and art were members who embraced the audience with

warmth and energy as they performed an African dance accompanied on drums, along with a sublime collection of beautifully crafted native African dress designed by Stephanie Haynes.

In her closing words, SGI-USA Vice Women's Leader Linda Johnson said, "Challenge that thing that is most difficult for you and create a victory there!"

To learn more about the April festival, please contact Tesfaye Abagaz by phone at (310) 396-1028, or by email at tabagaz@hotmail.com. **WT**



Members enjoy the African Events Organizing Committee's kickoff at the Los Angeles Friendship Center, Jan. 21.



A dance troupe enthusiastically performs as part of the kickoff toward an African Arts and Culture Festival in April.

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Science Exists For the Sake of People

Dialogues on Peace

‘The basis for peace lies in ordinary people becoming wise and not condoning the selfishness of leaders who are only concerned with promoting the interests of a select group of countries.’

On Nov. 17, 2000, the European Academy of Sciences and Arts EASA awarded SGI President Ikeda its Medal of Merit in recognition of his achievements in promoting the spirit of tolerance and contributing to world peace. The medal was presented by EASA President Felix Unger at the Seikyo Shim-bun Building in Shinanomachi, Tokyo. The event was attended by SGI representatives from six countries and territories.

The EASA was founded in 1990 by Dr. Unger together with Franz Kardinal König and Nikolaus Lobkowitz—current EASA honorary president and vice president, respectively—as a think tank with the goal of contributing to positive change in European culture, by repositioning the sciences and the arts in an integrative and interdisciplinary way. The academy brings together experts in a wide variety of fields to find practical solutions to international issues and promote global harmony, and its members include philosophers, artists, physicians, scientists, doctors, lawyers, sociologists, educators, ecologists, politicians, writers, journalists and grass-roots activists. It has some 1,200 members in 56 countries in Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Middle East. Among the academy's patrons are King Juan Carlos I of Spain, HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, former Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg, President Johannes Rau of Germany, President Árpád Göncz of Hungary, President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic and President Romano Prodi of the European Commission.

President Ikeda was appointed an honorary senator of

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



EASA President Felix Unger meets with Soka University, Japan students, Nov. 17, 2000.

the academy in 1997. Other leaders who share this distinction include former Austrian Prime Minister Franz Vranitzky, former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and former European Commission President Jacques Santer. Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev is an honorary EASA member.

The academy also actively pursues interfaith dialogue in the belief that religion, as the foundation of culture, has a vital role to play in advancing peace and human prosperity. In addition to such dialogue between Christianity, Judaism and Islam, EASA has conducted six dialogues between Buddhist and Christian faiths from 1997 to 2000, choosing the SGI as one of the groups to represent Buddhism. During a symposium in October 1999, Dr. Eugen Biser, a leading Christian theologian (professor at the University of Munich and dean of World Religion at EASA), said that the discussion had given him an entirely new appreciation of Buddhism as a teaching with a profound philosophical side.

In his speech at the presentation ceremony, Dr. Unger offered his congratulations on the Soka Gakkai's 70th anniversary. He praised President Ikeda's accomplishments in cultivating a spirit of tolerance in the world through interfaith dialogue and his efforts to contribute to global harmony.

The SGI leader delivered an acceptance speech, in which he said that tolerance must be the foundation of humankind in the

21st century. Explaining that this quality is also expressed in Buddhism by the word compassion, he pledged to continue working to spread the spirit of tolerance worldwide.

Following the presentation, Mr. Ikeda held a discussion with Dr. Unger, who is also a prominent heart surgeon, on health, education, life and death, and other topics. The Austrian doctor, formerly a professor of medicine at the Austria's University of Innsbruck, currently serves as head of the Department of Cardiac Surgery at Salzburg State Hospital and as chairman of Austria's Institute of Cardiac Surgery.

President Ikeda began by asking what foods are beneficial for the heart. Dr. Unger stressed the importance of eating a well-balanced diet, recommending that one avoid eating large servings of red meat and ensure that one's diet also includes fish, fruit, grains and vegetables. Drinking a glass of wine is also fine, he said. He emphasized, however, that balance is important and that eating and drinking to excess can lead to illness. In response to a question on the best exercise for cardiac health, Dr. Unger suggested walking every day, and using stairs rather than elevators whenever possible—something that he makes a point of doing. The heart surgeon also said that morning is the best time of day to exercise, because it improves circulation. Cardiovascular exercise helps us better tolerate daytime stress, he

added. Dr. Unger noted that walking is also a good way of relieving stress that is beneficial to the heart, as is getting sufficient sleep and having loving relationships.

Concurring that these guidelines contain important truths, President Ikeda then asked his guest what kind of factors contribute to longevity. Dr. Unger explained that statistically someone who reaches 60 stands a good chance of living to a ripe old age. In addition to our genes, he commented, staying active both mentally and physically also plays a major role in longevity. The SGI leader asked whether such spiritual activities as faith and belief also have an impact on longevity. Dr. Unger replied in the affirmative, saying that faith and belief are important because they provide stability in our lives and liberate us from fear. Asked about the ideal life span of human beings, Dr. Unger said that, all other things being equal, he thought people could live to 120. He explained that after 120 years human cells seem to lose their regenerative powers. Mr. Ikeda noted that Buddhism concurs in the view that 120 years is the natural span of human life.

The SGI leader next asked his guest about the feasibility of organ transplants from animals into humans, noting that there is currently considerable debate on the subject of transplanting hearts from pigs into human beings. Dr. Unger said he is skeptical on the subject, given the many difficult problems in-

involved. He pointed out, for example, that when tissue is transplanted from a different species there is a high risk that viruses endemic to the donor animal will also be introduced to the recipient. Asked about advances in artificial heart technology, Dr. Unger predicted that in the future artificial hearts would become as commonly used as pacemakers are today.

Relating that there have been a number of incidents in Japan recently where people have died as a result of medical malpractice, President Ikeda asked the physician about his thoughts on the best ways of preventing such accidents from occurring. Dr. Unger replied that since physicians are only human, there is always a danger that they can make an error. For that reason, when a mistake occurs it is important to carefully investigate the circumstances and determine the cause, he said. He noted that massive amounts of paperwork and hospital bureaucracy, combined with an over-reliance on computers, all tend to reduce the amount of time available for doctors to spend with patients.

Turning to the topic of brain death, the SGI leader observed that opinion around the world is divided on whether cessation of neural activity should be recognized as the death of a person. And he asked his guest about his view on the matter. Dr. Unger explained that during the 19th century, the appearance of black spots on the back was the standard for judging death. Later, for a period of about 50 years, the moment when the heart ceased activity, as displayed on an electrocardiogram, was regarded as constituting death. Today, he continued, the standard of brain death has been introduced, adding that it continues to be a very important issue.

Dr. Unger noted that the French word *coma* indicates a comatose state, while the term *coma dépassé* describes an excessive comatose state. In such a state, the brain ceases to function normally, body temperature falls, and while the heart may continue beating, there is a decline in circulation, so that the nails turn bluish black. Somewhere along the line this state came to be called "brain death"

Fostering Creative People

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

Dialogues on Education

'Youthful hardships are conducive to building character and inner strength.'

SGI President Ikeda met with Moscow State University Rector Victor A. Sadovnichy on Nov. 15, 2000, at the SGI International Conference Hall in Shinanomachi, Tokyo. They discussed the future publication of their ongoing dialogue on the theme of universities and society in the 21st century. Rector Sadovnichy was in Japan to participate in a Japan-Russia forum, at which he chaired a session on cultural exchange.

President Ikeda and Rector Sadovnichy have discussed a variety of subjects over the years since their first meeting in 1987, pursuing their dialogue in person and by correspondence. The volume they will publish focuses primarily on the role and mission of universities in the future and also covers such topics as fostering creative people, elementary and secondary education, home schooling, and the impact of information technology on education.

Dr. Sadovnichy is one of Russia's leading mathematicians. He is a member of the Standing Committee of Euro-



Moscow State University Rector Victor A. Sadovnichy talks with SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda on Nov. 15, 2000, at the SGI International Conference Hall in Shinanomachi, Tokyo.

pean University Rectors, the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Russian Academy of Science and Engineering.

Noting that youthful hardships are conducive to building character and inner strength, President Ikeda asked his guest about his own struggles as a young man. Dr. Sadovnichy shared that for two years before entering the university, he worked as a coal miner by day—laboring almost 2,000 feet beneath the ground—and studying at night. Asked

what books he would recommend to young people, the educator cited the works of the well-known Russian writer Alexandr Pushkin and American author Jack London, and he stressed the importance of literature for character development. On the subject of his mentors, the educator said that when he was in elementary school he had a teacher who helped him reveal his potential, and that at the university he was also greatly influenced by the renowned mathematician and bi-

ologist Dr. Israel Gelfand, under whom he studied.

Dr. Sadovnichy, who has published some 50 books and 300 academic papers, remarked that his greatest pride is a treatise he wrote on space-flight simulation. This work, he explained, made it possible for astronauts in training to experience all the stages of space flight—including the sensation of weightlessness—in a controlled environment on earth. **WT**

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in English, Dr. Unger said, a term that he believes is a mis-translation. He added that this is a tragedy, because due to the use of the term "brain death," people regard someone in a severe comatose state as being dead and discontinue intensive care and life-support systems that would otherwise have been continued in the past. He proposed that instead of "brain death," it should perhaps be termed a "permanent comatose state." At the very least, he asserted that the existence of such a state should be recognized.

President Ikeda noted that all physicians take what is known as the Hippocratic Oath, named after the Ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, as their fundamental ethical guide. He explained that Buddhism teaches principles of medical ethics through the ex-

ample of Jivaka, a skilled physician of ancient India who was also a devout Buddhist. He then asked his guest what kind of person, in his opinion, makes an ideal physician.

Dr. Unger remarked that what the medical field needs are people who are genuine physicians not merely skilled medical technicians. His definition of a physician, he explained, is a doctor who has a well-rounded character, rich humanity and balanced judgment. He went on to say that he felt the Hippocratic Oath—which includes injunctions to relieve suffering, give care and cure disease—to be a universal ethical foundation.

The SGI leader then turned the conversation to the activities of EASA and the areas that the academy plans to pursue in particular in the 21st century. Dr. Unger replied that it would focus on three main pivots: 1)

the relationship between human beings and nature; 2) the relationship between human beings themselves; and 3) the relationship between human beings and spirituality. Only when these three aspects are harmonized, he asserted, can we hope to achieve true stability. In this respect, he said the academy would continue to pursue its interdisciplinary approach. President Ikeda remarked that Dr. Unger's insight resonates with the Buddhist principle of three thousand realms in a single life-moment. He explained that the three areas that the doctor cited also correspond to the three realms of the environment, living beings, and the five components in Buddhism.

Dr. Unger further remarked that there is need for people to unite across borders, noting that human life transcends national boundaries. While mathematically one plus one equals

two, he noted, in life it is possible to make one plus one equal three. The doctor also stressed the importance of reevaluating science in terms of how it can contribute to humanity and of broadening our outlook toward science. President Ikeda agreed, saying that there is an urgent need to correct the backward notion that people somehow exist for the sake of science, when the opposite should be true.

As their conversation drew to a close, Dr. Unger frankly asked the SGI leader whether the world would become a more peaceful place. President Ikeda responded that the basis for peace lies in ordinary people becoming wise and not condoning the selfishness of leaders who are only concerned with promoting the interests of a select group of countries. To achieve this, he stressed, education and a spirit of tolerance are essential. **WT**

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THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

'Rainbow Over Cheju Island'

This is a place for poets. That was the feeling that enveloped me as I arrived on the Korean island of Cheju.

We drove through the lush countryside, each tree a vivid velvety green. Horses and cows grazed peacefully in the grassy fields, and many stones lined the road. Seeing the rock walls that had been built to block the wind, I pictured the rough, worn hands of the people who labored to lay each stone, hands that had seen much effort and toil.

I looked toward Mount Halla, a mysterious peak. It seemed as though the spirits of all living beings in the universe had gathered to form it. Holding a quiet dialogue with the heavens, this mountain, like a great loving mother, seemed to embrace all the immense joys of life, as well as all the anguished cries that have slipped through jaws clenched tightly in grief.

This is surely an island for poets, but also a place where politicians and businessmen should come to forget concerns of immediate profit and loss and talk about peace. Here they could calmly discuss and ponder the nature and meaning of true happiness. Here they could rediscover the poet within, and amicably and openly share fresh visions of the future.

This is a most fitting place for such discussions, because this island has suffered most tragically at the hands of politicians, and under an economy of exploitation. It is an island utterly tired of human conflict.

Cheju is a volcanic island. Although the volcano is now extinct, the island was formed of accumulated volcanic ash from repeated eruptions. The soil is sparse and thin. Bedrock of hardened lava lies merely a foot beneath the island surface.

Because the ground was not very fertile, many women made their living by diving for abalone, while many of the men left the island to find work in the cities. A good number went to work in Japan. Despite their longing for their homeland, too many, for reasons beyond their control, could never return. Even on learning of their parent's death, for all the tears they shed, they could not go home.

I am sure that in their hearts, and at night in their dreams, the winds and warm sunlight of their beloved home called to them. Their hearts filled with memories: playing in the fields with calves; standing at the cape in a strong wind gazing out at the deep blue sea; fields abounding with yellow flowers; foothills arrayed in elegant autumn attire; a snow-capped Mount Halla floating in blue skies; gorgeous springs and summers; breath-taking autumns and winters.

Many were the mothers and fathers who spoke with a far-off gleam in their eye about their beloved homeland to sons and daughters who had grown up knowing only Japan. They passed on still longing to see their home.

Both mainland Korea and Japan discriminated against the people of this island; but through it all, these noble mothers and fathers lived with pride. Brothers and sisters kept their heads held high regardless of how unjustly they were humiliated or insulted, enduring one abuse after another.

Mount Halla must surely have known the hearts of these people. As if in reply, I can almost hear the mountain saying: "I understand! I know all of your struggles, for you are all my precious children!"

Because of their dire circumstances, the people of the island lived by helping one another. Someone reminiscing about life here recalled how dinner for a whole family fit onto one plate. Children competed to fill their mouths. Their mother would tell them again and again: "Eat!...Have some more!" while only taking a few bites for herself. "Eat!...Have some more!"—these words surpass any eloquent poem or lofty theory. They

The elderly who survived these torturous times might have given up and died were it not for thoughts of their young grandchildren. With no more tears left to cry, they worked their small fields with wrinkled hands. Mothers who had lost husbands carried their babies in baskets into the fields, where they labored while quaking with anger at the injustices they had suffered. Amid the extreme summer heat, babies wailed in restless discomfort. When these children grew older, their families could not afford even to send them to school....

Their suffering was inexpressible in words. Any attempt to describe it would have brought uncontrollable

sobbing, and so they remained silent. Gritting their teeth, they buried their sorrows deep, deep within their souls. Because they remained silent, those sorrows turned to stone. It is said that one should never raise one's voice or shout while on Mount Halla, because doing so will cause those stone-like sorrows to come forth and drift about as dense fog.

Still, the people of this island have lived on. Day and night they have survived, revering the mountain. They have endured and advanced through the most violent storms of life, constantly reaching and grasping for hope. Their unyielding spirit is the heart of Cheju Island.

The two Chinese characters that form the name of Mount Halla respectively mean "river" and

"to grasp." The first character is also used in Japan to describe the Milky Way. This mountain does indeed seem to be reaching to grasp that hope-filled river of stars glittering in the heavens. The mountain peak resembles the palm of a hand open upward toward a sky of dreams.

On departing the island, Dr. Moon-Boo Cho, the president of Cheju University, graciously accompanied me to the airport to send me off. Beaming, he told me, "That was a beautiful rainbow this morning!" In Dr. Cho's resounding voice, I sensed a strong conviction for Cheju Island's bright future, which made me very happy. I believe that Cheju Island will develop from here on to become the Hawaii of the East—an island of peace that will bring Korea, China, and Japan closer together. It will be a focal point for the future maritime era, a port of free trade. Its dreams are ever expanding.

Just as Mount Halla underwent repeated transformation through volcanic eruption to arrive at its present beauty, this island whose people have suffered the most, must become a paradise of happiness to surpass all others.

Those who have passed on can no longer speak of their own sufferings. That is why those living today must speak out for justice. To the extent that their mothers and fathers suffered and struggled, this generation and the next should achieve a state of indomitable happiness.

I beheld the rainbow that appeared on the day of my departure as a bridge linking us to that new era. I can only pray that such a rainbow of peace will protect Cheju Island for all eternity!



are beautiful poetry of the human spirit, the poetry of love and affection.

The people of this island are pure-hearted and honest. Wars always came from across the sea. Under occupation by the Japanese military, Mount Halla was turned into a fortress. Cheju Island became a shield to protect Japan from U.S. forces. Japan's strategy was to sacrifice the island and its people to the enemy. The residents were forced to dig trenches in their beloved mountain with their own hands.

After the war, just as peace returned to the island, Mount Halla was to witness another extreme tragedy. That was the "April 3 Incident" of 1948. Some on the island protested the division of North and South Korea. As punishment, the entire island was laid to waste. Most of the inhabitants were unaware of what was going on, but the government accused many of being traitors who supported the North, and killed them without any proof. At the same time, guerrilla forces aligned with the North killed innocent people, accusing them of cooperating with the government. It is still unknown how many people died during this ordeal. Some say it was 30,000, while others suggest as many as 80,000. And still, after this massacre, the rest of Korea viewed the people of Cheju Island as criminals, though they were the victims and had suffered the most.

What is ideology? Should it not be to give life to the people? It certainly should not exist to give people reasons to kill. At that time, however, people around the world were poisoned with Cold War insanity. Those who sacrificed the most to this insanity were the people of Cheju.