

World TRIBUNE

INTERNATIONAL ISSUE
Our monthly focus on
SGI's movement of
peace, culture and
education.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE



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Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401 and at additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

No. 3343

\$2.00

APRIL 27, 2001

Gandhi, King, Ikeda Exhibition Opens in Atlanta

By ANGELA HARRIS, ELEANOR HUNTER, QUAN SULLIVAN, DONNA TEALER and LISA WATTS
ATLANTA CORRESPONDENTS

Hundreds of people of diverse races, religions and cultures gathered on March 31, for the grand opening of the "Gandhi, King, Ikeda: A Legacy of Building Peace" Exhibition and Interfaith Convocation at the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta.

The gathering and exhibition celebrated the lives of three great leaders — Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and SGI President Daisaku Ikeda — who have fought for a peaceful and non-violent society. These three men, from three different cul-

tures and continents, dedicated their lives to saving and reviving the human race.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the preview opening of the exhibition. Participants included Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, Morehouse College President Walter E. Massey, Dr. Lawrence Carter Sr., dean of the chapel, the Reverend Dr. Michael Beckwith, president of the Agape International Spiritual Center, and SGI-USA Vice General Director Richard Brown.

The exhibition was created at the request of Dean Carter and designed by the Hughes Group of Washington, D.C., headed by Bob Hughes. "There is an awesome message of connectedness at the heart of this exhibition," said Hughes. "Dean Carter has often stressed the connection between Tho-



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Dr. Lawrence Carter, dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta, explains a panel of the 'Gandhi, King, Ikeda: A Legacy of Building Peace' Exhibition to His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan (left), April 8. The exhibition debuted March 31 in the lobby of the chapel.

reau and Gandhi, the connection between Gandhi and King and his belief that all three of these men's ideals are embodied in President Ikeda.

"This exhibition breaks down the artificial separation of people

by skin color, belief systems and cultural traditions," he continued. "There's the Indian tradition of Gandhi, the Western tradition of King and the Eastern tradition of Ikeda. All three men share the same dream and the same ideals.

It is important for us to draw confidence from their struggles to be able to face our own troubles with the same spirit.

"Also, this exhibition shows

PLEASE SEE EXHIBITION, 6

Prince of Jordan Receives First Community Builders Prize

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan (right) receives the first Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize from (l-r) Dr. Lawrence Carter, dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College, SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda and Morehouse College President Walter E. Massey, April 8.

By ANGELA HARRIS, BEVERLY REMLAND and LISA WATTS
ATLANTA CORRESPONDENTS

On April 8, at the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College, the first Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize was awarded to His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan. Nearly 2,000 people filled the chapel with cheers and high spirits, inaugurating what will be an annual event.

SGI-USA was a co-sponsor of the ceremony, titled Century Sunday. More than 1,300 SGI-USA members gathered from all over the Southern Zone, including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Car-

olina and Tennessee.

Larry Draper, an SGI-USA member from Memphis, Tenn., commented that "this wonderful event is a fitting tribute to three great leaders. That one of them is SGI President Ikeda makes me even more proud to be an SGI member."

The prize was created by Dr. Lawrence E. Carter Sr., dean of the King Chapel, to reflect the common vision of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and SGI President Ikeda, and to encourage others striving toward peace to continue their valuable work. After his meeting with President Ikeda in September 2000, Dean Carter said he realized that President Ikeda was "the living embodiment of the

ideals of Gandhi and King."

Prince Hassan, the prize's first recipient, is widely recognized as a world leader in the areas of peace, human rights and inter-cultural dialogue. He is a pioneer of peace efforts in the Middle East, bringing together Muslims, Jews and Christians to discuss peaceful solutions to the problems facing humanity. He is also the third president of the Club of Rome, of which President Ikeda is an honorary member.

In his acceptance address, titled "On the Ethics of Reconciliation and Tolerance," Prince Hassan expressed the realization that "possibly the longest distance in the world is

PLEASE SEE PRIZE, 7

New SGI Chapters Created in Slovenia, Hungary and Bulgaria

On March 31 and April 1, SGI representatives from 12 East European countries — Poland, Czech Republic, Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Slovakia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Russia, Lithuania and Ukraine — gathered together at the SGI-Austria Culture Center and pledged to work for peace in their respective regions. SGI President Ikeda sent a message of encouragement, lauding their gathering as a beautiful garden of “human lotus flowers” and a symbol of SGI humanism that contributes to the resurgence of joy among people. It was also announced that on May 3, official SGI chapters will be created in Slovenia, Hungary and Bulgaria. In Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, SGI members gather for discussion meetings each month. In 1999, “Dialogue with Nature,” a collection of President Ikeda’s photographs, was hosted in Budapest, Hungary. The exhibit’s success became the catalyst for the growth of SGI-Hungary.

SGI Members in Macedonia Work and Pray for Peace

In February, SGI members in Macedonia held their first discussion meeting in Skopje, the capital city. Members gave experiences of applying Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism and

overcoming difficulties in their daily lives and shared their hopes to establish security and happiness for all of the Macedonian people.

Just recently, a group of ethnic Albanian rebels, calling themselves the National Liberation Army of Macedonia, clashed with Macedonian government forces along the Macedonian-Kosovo border. SGI-Yugoslavia Chapter Chief Masaru Katano, who attended the SGI discussion meeting in Skopje in February, commented that every SGI Macedonian member is determined to see to it that the sun of peace rises once again in their country.

SGI-Germany Creates Chapter in Former East Germany

SGI-Germany will establish its first chapter in the former East Germany this year, the 10th anniversary of Germany’s unification. Clemens Amme and Julia Amme will be appointed as co-leaders of Sachsen-Thüringen Chapter; SGI-Germany Chief Advisor Peter Kühn will serve as adviser. The SGI-Germany mem-

bers in eastern Germany are presently preparing for the inaugural meeting scheduled for May 3. On the same day, the SGI’s World Boys and Girls Art Exhibition will open in Seifhennersdorf City, Germany.

Monument With SGI President’s Words Erected in Australia

A monument inscribed with a quote from SGI President Ikeda was unveiled at the Perth Zoo, Perth City, Western Australia on March 21, Harmony Day, a day for reflecting on and celebrating Australia’s cultural diversity. The unveiling was part of official commemorative events for Harmony Day, sponsored by the Western Australia state government. Western Australia Premier Geoff Gallop (who is also Minister for Multicultural Interests) and local elementary school children participated. The monument stands in Harmony Garden, established with the help of SGI-Australia members. It is inscribed with the following quotation from President Ikeda’s 2000 Peace Proposal: “As we enhance our respect

for the sanctity of life and human dignity through our daily behavior and steady efforts toward dialogue, the foundations for a culture of peace will deepen and strengthen, allowing a new global civilization to blossom.”

Brazilian City Dedicates Park to SGI President

On March 16, Triunfo City, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, dedicated “Professor Daisaku Ikeda Park,” located within the Corpo Santos Culture Center. The center supports cultural activities for children in João Pessoa Town. Triunfo Mayor José Ezequiel Meireles de Souza commended Mr. Ikeda as an individual who has contributed to peace and has strengthened bonds between people through advancing compassion, education and culture. A plaque was placed in a prominent location in the park with an inscription paying tribute to “Professor Daisaku Ikeda,” the “illustrious humanist and pacifist,” and “his noble contributions to the prosperity of humanity.” A gazebo stands on one end and brick walkways weave a geometric maze through a grove of trees that provide shade to visitors, who can relax on the white park benches placed throughout the park.

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



Causing Protective Forces To Support Us

Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD



By GREG MARTIN
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

From “The Izu Exile,” The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 35–38.

What caused you to inwardly believe in the Lotus Sutra and make offerings to me during my more than thirty-day stay there? I was hated and resented by the steward and the people of the district even more than I was in Kamakura. Those who saw me scowled, while those who merely heard my name were filled with spite. And yet, though I was there in the fifth month when rice was scarce, you secretly fed me. Have my parents been reborn in a place called Kawana, in Ito of Izu Province?

The fourth volume of the Lotus Sutra states, “[I will send...] men and women of



pure faith, to offer alms to the teacher of the Law.” The meaning of this sutra passage is that the heavenly gods and benevolent deities will assume various forms such as those of men and women, and present offerings to help the persons who practice the Lotus Sutra. There can be no doubt that this refers to you and your wife being born as a man and woman, and making offerings to Nichiren, the teacher of the Law. (WND, 35)

Beyond this expression of gratitude for the care he received during his exile

to the Izu Peninsula, the Daishonin is in awe of Funamori Yasaburo, a fisherman, and his wife for their bravery and compassion in protecting the life of this “hated and resented” teacher of the Law.

The Daishonin tells the couple in this letter that he regards the protection they gave him as the workings of Buddhist gods. The Lotus Sutra, he explains, promises that “heavenly gods and benevolent deities will assume various forms such as those of men and women, and present offerings to help the persons who practice the Lotus Sutra.”

The same principle holds true for all of us, the Daishonin’s direct disciples. Through faith in the Mystic Law, we manifest the state of Buddhahood, causing the protective forces within the environment to support our lives in many ways.

When we link our dreams with the same mind or intention as the Daishonin—the achievement of kosen-rufu—and strive for them based on strong Buddhist practice within

the Buddhist community, we find the environment rallying to our support at all times. By protecting the Mystic Law, we make the cause to, in turn, be protected by this universal Law.

This is why SGI President Ikeda emphasizes that “when we chant and exert ourselves for kosen-rufu, we can block devils or negative, destructive forces from ‘entering’ our lives and allow the positive, protective forces of the universe to ‘enter’ instead. Please chant with strong conviction, as if calling, ‘Brahma, Shakra and the gods of the Sun and the Moon, “enter” my life and put your power to work!’ The ultimate essence of faith in the Mystic Law is to manifest the Daishonin’s life within ourselves. We can then fight with the same strength as the Daishonin. When we do so, we will never be defeated, no matter what hardships we encounter. We will not be unhappy. We will not fail to win. We will not fail to become happy. This is the quintessence of faith” (April 13 *World Tribune*, p. 7).

By embracing the Gohonzon with faith, studying, demonstrating actual proof in daily life and using our experiences to teach others faith in Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we fulfill our most noble mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth. **W**



The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907; (310) 260-8900; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org SGIUSBS@aol.com

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Return To: SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

Subscription Rates (subject to state taxes) \$15 for Three Months; \$28 for Six Months; \$50 for One Year; \$85 for Two Years; \$125 for Three Years

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EXPERIENCE — ZAMI, AIEA, HAWAII

From a Troubled Past to Victory

For Zami, abuse and loss have given way to joy and fulfillment.

I am a survivor of sexual child abuse that started when I was 7 and continued until I was 13. Because of the abuse I suffered, I wanted to have a child that would love me unconditionally. At 15, I gave birth to my son. My mother made me painfully aware that if I felt I was big enough to have a child, I was big enough to get a job and support that child. Yet only 18 months after my son's birth, my mother died from breast cancer.

I had no place to go, so the young man who fathered my child offered to marry me. I left New York City and went to California to join this young man in a place where I had no family, no friends, no support. Within a month of my arrival, I was pregnant again. By the time I was 18, I was married with two children. But my husband was abusive, even hitting me when I was pregnant with my second child. By the time I was 20, we had separated. I was not going to live my life that way.

So here I was with two small children, no support, working two jobs earning minimum wage. But the obstacles kept coming. I became very ill, and at the age of 22, I had to have a hysterectomy. Knowing that I could no longer bear children didn't upset me too much. Raising two boys alone was a challenge in itself.

I often wondered why I had to struggle so much just to live a single day. I must have angered someone in my previous lives to have had such heavy karma. These thoughts would lead me to Buddhism. I had tried different religions and often walked away feeling discouraged. It seemed as though they required my life be judged by standards that came from an external source. I was looking for happiness from within. It felt hypocritical to me, so I decided not to concern myself with any religion at all.

One day in 1986, my oldest son asked if I would like to go to a meeting where the actor Patrick Duffy would be attending. My son had befriended another boy whose mother was a district leader in the area. That night changed my life forever.

I remember walking up the



sidewalk and hearing this thunderous sound coming out of the house and thought, "What in the world is going on in there?" At first I didn't want to go in, but something told me everything was going to be OK. The house was filled with many people chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Their energy and the joy on their faces moved me. I wanted what they had. They told me to chant every day, and I would begin to notice a difference in my life. I had had a lot of pain in my life, so I thought, "If chanting that phrase will make a difference, why not try it?"

I finally felt that I had found a religion that allowed me to be the person that I am without being judged. I could make a difference in the world. Simply put, chanting lifted my life-condition.

One day, someone came up to me and asked if I was pregnant. I was surprised, knowing that this was not possible. When I asked why she asked that question, she said I had a glow about me. Someone else asked if I was in love. She too said it was the glow. I realized this glow was from my Buddhist practice, and I told her, "I'm not pregnant or in love, I just chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo."

I continued to practice, knowing all the while there would be new struggles and sorrows. Five years into my practice, my youngest son was killed

in a drive-by shooting while visiting his father in California. He was 16. I was living in Germany at the time and didn't have a support system in place. When I went to my son's funeral, I was so angry I was unable to chant. I felt that the struggles to survive another day continued to mount. Yet at the ceremony and to my amazement, my brother, who

was never connected to any religion, took out his prayer beads and started chanting as they placed my son's body into the crematory. In the midst of tragedy, the beauty of Buddhism became evident.

When I returned to Germany, I was still very angry and had a hard time mourning. I sought happiness outside of myself and ended up marrying a man who

was practically a stranger. Within months, I realized the marriage wasn't going to work. It was many months later that I met an SGI member and slowly began renewing my practice, letting go of the anger and starting to feel happy again.

A fellow SGI member also encouraged me to continue chanting for my son. She said that this would not only affect my life, but it would also extend into the universe and affect my son's eternal life. On hearing of the death of a follower's son, Nichiren Daishonin writes: "I hope that, if you, his loving mother, are thinking with longing about your son, you will chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and pray to be reborn in the same place.... If all of you nurture the same seeds of Myohorenge-kyo in your hearts, then you all will be reborn together in the same land of Myohorenge-kyo" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1074.) I knew my son was OK, and I was able to move on.

Within the next couple of years, I realized that I had goals I could not attain while living in Germany, such as going back to school and purchasing a house. A relative of mine, aware of my desires, extended an invitation to move to Hawaii. In December 1994, I arrived in Mililani and in 1995, I started school at Chaminade University. Since I had

served in the Army and had become a disabled veteran, the Veterans Administration offered to pay all of my tuition, books and supplies, including a \$500 monthly stipend. Working full-time to support myself while attending school at night, I graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's in psychology and a master's in elementary education. I am presently teaching Kindergarten at Waiialua Elementary. At this point in my life, I can honestly say that with determination, action and faith, I have been able to attain many of the goals that I had set for myself.

Still, life is never easy. There was another obstacle waiting. My only son, Jason, has been diagnosed with full-blown AIDS. Do I give up now? Never. It is only with this Buddhism that I have been able to survive and to remain strong. Chanting enables me to always have hope and to keep challenging everything life has to offer. I continue to chant for my son and am happy to report that when I last saw him, he looked healthy despite his condition.

Before I moved to Hawaii, I generally practiced on my own. But I now have the fortune of having many people support me. They have given of themselves to be by my side, to help me remain strong, to guide me through my practice and to give me hope when I felt there was none. This has given me a sense of joy beyond description. I offer them my thanks for helping me solidify my practice and showing me that through faith, practice and study, we can bring about change. **WT**

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.

Individuals seeking admission to the MA program must hold a bachelor's de-

gree 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 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.

Introducing SUA's Social & Behavioral Science Concentration Faculty

By PAUL R. CARBAJAL
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

The mission of Soka University of America is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life. The faculty of the Social and Behavioral Sciences concentration is committed to helping students understand the depth and beauty of cultures and human behavior as one of its primary teaching goals.

The curriculum further embraces an interdisciplinary approach by examining cultural diversity, social problems and human behavior incorporating perspectives from sociology, economics, psychology, anthropology, linguistics and political science.

"The curriculum provides students with tools to examine

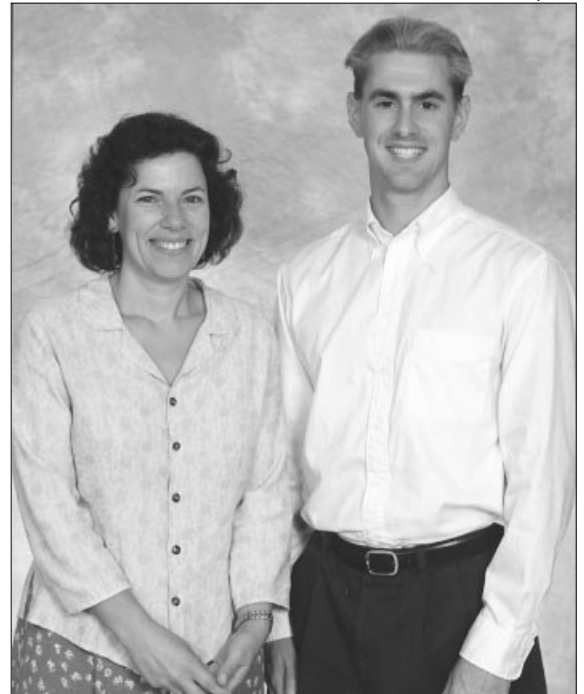
and address global issues and concerns," says Kathleen Adams, Cultural Anthropology professor. "In addition, as a group, our faculty are extremely well-suited to offer students global perspectives. Social and Behavioral Sciences faculty have personal and professional interest and experience in many parts of the world, including China, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, France, Cuba and Panama."

Students completing courses in SBS will have a better understanding of the major issues and questions posed by the different SBS disciplinary approaches and of how groups, institutions, societies and/or cultures shape and are shaped by human behavior. Students will be able to articulate an awareness of the interplay between genetic, social and cul-

tural influences on human behavior. They will also be able to understand social science methods of inquiry.

"I hope that the SBS curriculum prepares our students who are interested in graduate school by instilling in them the ability to think critically and use the tools with which to examine questions about human behavior," mentions Jeff Green, Psychology professor. "Our goal for students who choose SBS as a concentration is that they learn to ask questions about human behavior, have the tools to attempt to answer those questions, and apply those tools to social problems wherever they may find them."

The SBS faculty don't want students to stop simply at knowing how to research social problems, but to take what they have learned into the real world to attempt to solve many of these



Kathleen Marie Adams, Ph.D. (Cultural Anthropology), and Jeffrey D. Green, Ph.D. (Psychology).

pressing problems and concerns. "Probably, the most important goal of the SBS curriculum is to help students understand the complexity of culture and of

human behavior," notes Green. "Behavior has a multitude of causes, so there are rarely easy explanations for why people do what they do." **WT**



The Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda Library at SUA, Aliso Viejo.

SUA 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, 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
Boxed 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

A HIGH TECH CAMPUS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

By WENDY HARDER
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

The technology design for Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo reflects its unique educational philosophy encouraging human interaction by integrating technology into both the natural and building environments.

SUA is providing each student with his/her own laptop computer as part of the tuition. Data ports provide high-speed network access and are available in every dorm room and throughout the campus. Miles of fiber optic cable provide more than 3,800 information outlets throughout the campus.

"By giving each student a computer, we are creating a 'baseline,' so that students are equal in terms of their equipment," said Scott Cowdrey, director of Information Technology for SUA, AV. "We've even located ports in outdoor spaces throughout the campus, so students can sit down virtually anywhere, plug in and get to work.

"As a small liberal arts college, our focus is on interpersonal communication and instruction. Many people wonder why we've gone to such lengths

to incorporate this highly sophisticated technology on our campus," Cowdrey continued. "The answer is that we want to enable our professors to leverage the incredible functionality which technology brings while maintaining a close, hands-on classroom environment."

Cowdrey explained that SUA, AV professors have a software application to create a Web site for each course. Instructors are able to post materials and course outlines, and attach images, documents, or digital videos to the course's Web site, freeing them from printing and distributing bulky handouts or spending class time covering material students can view independently.

"By giving our professors the ability to disseminate class materials via their Web sites, we are helping them maximize their small class environment. We're giving them more time to interact with their students through group discussions," Cowdrey said.

The 21st century has definitely arrived at SUA, AV where classrooms feature a sophisticated wireless network-based touch-screen, touch-panel control system. This system acti-

vates the projectors, screens, VCRs, DVDs, lights, curtains and just about everything in the room. In addition, the campus features a 150-seat multi-media lecture hall, two distance-learning classrooms, six multi-media classrooms and three interactive classrooms.

SUA, AV has also enhanced the cable TV connections in the student's dormitory rooms. In addition to traditional video ports, SUA has added a satellite connection so that international students and students studying foreign languages will be able to receive channels offering programs in many languages.

SUA, AV is also one of the first entirely "keyless" campuses in the nation. Students will access their residence halls and dorm rooms with a special card—which will also allow them to do their laundry, buy lunch, check out books at the library and use the vending machines.

"Our students and faculty have technology available at their fingertips. Technology empowers us with speed and information, but it is only a supplement to an effective and stimulating learning environment," Cowdrey said. "And we certainly have that at SUA." **WT**

Photo by STEPHANIE SYDNEY



As construction nears completion, a worker carves the name Ikeda Library over the library archway.

The Linus Pauling Exhibition

May 5 - June 10, 2001

Open to the Public



When: May 5 - June 10, 2001

Tuesdays - Saturdays

9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Sundays

11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

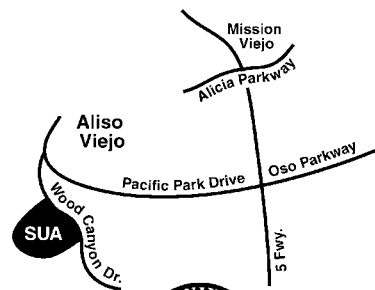
Closed Mondays

Where: Soka University of America

Founders Hall Art Gallery

1 University Dr.

Aliso Viejo, CA 92656



General Information: (949) 480-4000

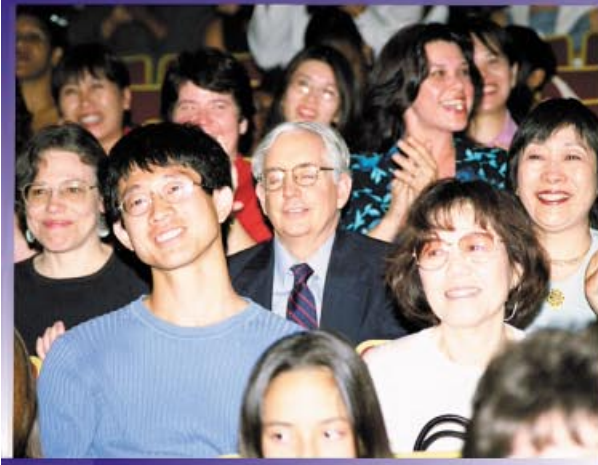
Web: www.soka.edu

Fax: (949) 480-4001

FREE ADMISSION

Construction Update

- Names have been carved into stone over the archways of Pauling Hall, Gandhi Hall and Ikeda Library.
- Hardwood floors are completed in the Recreation Center, the Founders Hall Art Gallery and the Student Center Dining Hall.
- The base floor has been poured in Peace Lake.



FROM EXHIBITION, 1

the vision of President Ikeda. It provides a means to understand that we are all connected, not superficially, but on a deep level. By embracing that belief, it gives us one more opportunity to take a step toward peace. Because of this exhibition, many people will be able to see President Ikeda in a new context — as a living emissary of peace in the same category with Dr. King and Gandhi.”

After viewing the exhibition, the crowd proceeded inside the chapel to begin the interfaith portion of the gathering and view a film entitled *Gandhi, King, Ikeda: Heroes of the Global Community*.

The film depicts the lives of the three men, observing the parallels of their struggles and how each dedicated themselves to building a peaceful society. In the film, Dr. Alfred Balitzer, formerly of Claremont McKenna College and now dean of faculty at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, mentions that “if Gandhi and King were still alive today, I believe they would pull Daisaku Ikeda up to the podium alongside them, because he is the next generation.”

The Agape International Choir opened the ceremony as honorees made their way to the stage. The choir enriched the program’s theme of “One River, Many Wells” through spiritual song. The renowned group, whose music has been heard all around the world, is a multi-ethnic choir with 150 active members. The combination of rhythmic sounds, superb vocalists, talented musicians and various styles of ethnic dress ignited the audience. Forty-nine choir members traveled from Culver City, Calif., paying their own way to participate in the event.

Also on hand were local state and city officials, as well as rep-

resentatives of various religions and denominations who, alongside the Morehouse College constituents and SGI-USA members, were presented three separate awards bearing the Gandhi, King, Ikeda name: the Spiritual Courage, Liberty and Courage of Conscience awards.

The Spiritual Courage award was presented to people of different faith traditions. Buddhist, Bahá’í, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, New Thought and Unity believers were given the award to thank them for their continuous work in their respective organizations and for getting their members to participate side-by-side in this event.

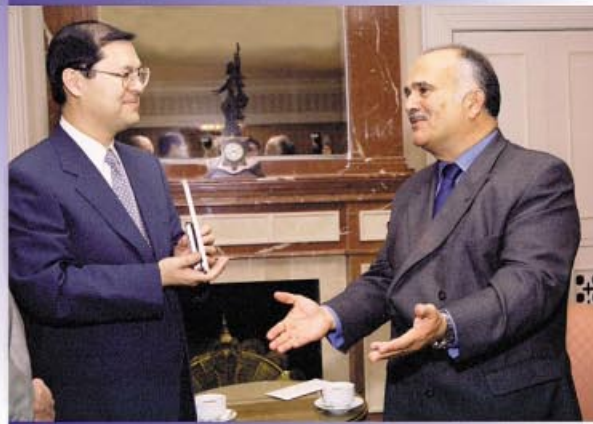
The Liberty award was presented to government officials instrumental in changing the design of the Georgia state flag. The new design is helping to bring about a new feeling amongst Georgia citizens, who were at odds over the Confederate symbol, which is now at the bottom of the flag. Shrinking the Confederate symbol and placing it at the bottom of the flag help depict a portion of Southern tradition and history, rather than representing the entire population.

The Courage of Conscience award was presented to the Mayor of Atlanta and the Governor of Georgia. The two were both instrumental in uniting the citizens in the Southeastern United States — Mayor Bill Campbell for initiating interfaith meetings that began in 1999 and Governor Roy Barnes for his work on the new flag.

Mayor Campbell commented that, through the exhibition, he hoped the public will “gain a better understanding and appreciation for the global nature of the struggle for freedom.”

—Nicole D. Collier contributed to this article.

Photos by LUCY ESTEPHANOS, JERRI McWILLIAMS and GREGORY NAKASUJI



Gandhi, King
A Legacy of Bu...





King, Ikeda:
of Building Peace



FROM PRIZE, I

from the mind to the heart." He asked the audience if they, through their own efforts, can help society "move from a culture of existing to a culture of participating. The cornerstones of such a movement are surely the respect for life, a responsibility towards future generations, protection of the human habitat and, most of all, to move from acquisitiveness to altruism.... We must stop working against something and start working for something, working for a sharing of cultures and perceptions."

Also celebrated was the induction of a portrait of President and Mrs. Ikeda to the Martin Luther King Jr. International Hall of Honor. "We do this today," said Dean Carter, "in recognition of the fact that Dr. Ikeda is now widely believed to be the world's leading proponent of international peace."

Attending the ceremony on behalf of President and Mrs. Ikeda was SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda, the couple's eldest son. Vice President Ikeda commented that the Gandhi, King, Ikeda prize and traveling exhibition "represent a concrete and viable way to continue the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King through public education toward nonviolence and reconciliation. We feel it is our mission to advance always the cause of equality and freedom, wherever there is injustice, oppression and racism."

Outside the chapel, high-energy Taiko drummers, SGI-USA members from New Orleans, greeted the crowd with beats from the Far East. Dressed

in traditional Japanese outfits called *happi* coats, the drummers were invited by Dean Carter and have been challenging themselves to win in their daily lives through this activity.

At the close of the gathering, Sharon Pesante, an SGI-USA member from Tallahassee, Fla., summed up the feelings of the majority of the attendees: "The Prince of Jordan was wonderful. He spoke about things President Ikeda has been talking about for a long time. For me, personally, it was a real wake-up call. No wonder President Ikeda can talk about the 23rd century! This is how large his vision is. I realized that I need to widen my own vision for the future."

The event was a significant milestone for the members of SGI-USA's Southern Zone. At an April 9 meeting at the Atlanta Community Center celebrating the members' remarkable achievements of the previous two weeks, SGI North America Bureau Director Norimasa Saito commented that "President Ikeda has often stated the center of *kosen-rufu* is found in America. So, if we are able to achieve *kosen-rufu* here in Atlanta, doesn't it follow that we will be able to achieve *kosen-rufu* anywhere in the world?"

SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima congratulated the members on "opening a new era where people can see how powerful Buddhism is and learn something tremendous. You have opened up a beautiful community filled with friendship and trust."

— Nicole D. Collier, Eleanor Hunter and Quan Sullivan contributed to this article.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE GANDHI, KING, IKEDA COMMUNITY BUILDERS PRIZE CEREMONY

Pave The Way Toward a New Culture of Peace

‘A Buddhist scripture states, “If the spring is inexhaustible, the stream will never run dry,”’ writes SGI President Ikeda. ‘We must never let the copious flow of the awakened spirit run dry. We must ceaselessly refresh its springs, sharing and conveying it to the generations who will shoulder the challenges and promise of the future.’

Respected President Walter E. Massey of Morehouse College; Dean Lawrence Edward Carter Sr. of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel; Esteemed members of the King Family; and of the Gandhi Family; Ladies and gentlemen, friends.

Together with SGI members in 163 countries and regions throughout the world, I wish to offer this message of felicitations and solidarity with all those who have gathered together to attend this Century Sunday, the final event of the Spiritual Awareness Week. I am confident that these events will, like a brilliant dawn, illuminate the future path of humanity in the 21st century. Please also accept our heartfelt congratulations on the first anniversary of the establishment of the Gandhi Institute for Reconciliation.

Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. were great leaders of peace and humanism whose achievements stand resplendent in the annals of human history. As the heirs to their spiritual legacy, your presence at this gathering is a brilliant beacon of hope for the new century.

The 20th century was an era ravaged as no other by the horrors of war and violence. It was against this destruction that these two champions of nonviolence made their stand. They were spurred by the burning conviction that no one has the right to deprive people of freedom and dignity. They were moved by the intense determination to end the



tragic folly of humans wreaking suffering on their fellow humans. Firmly resolved to transform human history from its very depths, they arose to blaze new paths through an uncharted, pathless wilderness.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of their successors, the message of these two spiritual giants — which they offered their lives to engrave on the pages of history — has become a guiding principle for the international community. We see this in the fact that the United Nations has designated the first 10 years of the 21st century the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the World's Children. This is indeed a crystallization and embodiment of the power of their vision as well as your dedication to nurture and extend that vision.

We must call forth the limitless power of the spirit.

Earlier this year, to further the noble goals of the international decade and with your generous support, SGI-USA staged here at Morehouse College the exhibition “Treasures of the Future: Children's Rights and Realities.” It was our great honor in this way to be able to help commemorate the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birth.

In order to keep today's children and all future generations from inheriting — from falling prey — to the negative legacy of the 20th century, we must call forth from within the limitless power of the spirit, the power of hope and courage. Nothing inspires these qualities more powerfully than the examples of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King.

Gandhi once stated that “a poet is one who can call forth the good latent in the human breast.” In this sense, both Gandhi and Dr. King were poets of the highest imaginable standing. They believed ceaselessly in the capacities for good that reside in the human spirit. They uncovered and discovered the capacity for good in all people, equally and without exception. Committed first and foremost

to the inner transformation of the individual, they worked with vibrant energy to inspire people to bring forth their very highest, their most noble potential.

Dr. King declared: “Today the question is not whether we shall be free but by what course we will win” that freedom. His concern was focused on the single question of how we can attain true and lasting victory through peaceful means.

Armed only with an unyielding faith in the power of dialogue, these two poets plunged headlong into the raging torrents, the violent storms of reality —

*Always alongside those
who suffer!
Everywhere challenging
social evils!
Forever amidst the common
people!*

At times like the sun, shining radiantly on those who languish in the dark gloom of despair, at times like the moonlight, gently embracing those in the very abyss of misery, Gandhi and Dr. King awakened people to the sublime dignity of their own lives, as well as the lives of others. In this way they worked to construct a spreading solidarity of peace and nonviolence, one person at a time.

The struggle waged by these two poets of peace clearly demonstrates the path forward as we seek together to create a world free from war and violence in the 21st century.

Both men embraced, in the very depths of their being, an unshakable confidence in final victory — no matter what billows of criticism surged, no matter what storms of oppression raged.

King and Gandhi saw each of the world's inhabitants as fellow citizens.

What was it that enabled them to maintain such undaunted strength, such profound faith, at all times and in all circumstances? I believe the answer can be found in the cosmic, universal scale of their religious convictions, the faith in which their lives were rooted and framed.

Unfettered by any narrow nationalist or sectarian concerns, both Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi saw each of the world's inhabitants as fellow citizens equally lit by the inner brilliance of life. And they believed that our highest duty and responsibility is to be loyal to the voice of conscience that issues forth from the deepest reaches of each of us.

It is well known that when Gandhi translated John Ruskin's work *Unto This Last*, he titled it *Sarvodaya* — “the happiness of all.” I believe this expressed his knowledge that, so long as there is even one person suffering, one person shackled in misery, none of us can be fully, truly happy. Without action inspired from within, by a spontaneous spirit welling forth from within, we cannot create the kind of society and world where the full enjoyment of human rights is a reality for all.

I firmly believe that a renewal of the human spirit, energized by this kind of religious conviction, must be the driving force for efforts to bring forth a new era of human rights.

It is vital that we establish clear ethical guidelines for human rights. But if these remain mere unembodied principles or externally imposed rules, in the end we will fail to expose and counter the root causes of discrimination and oppression.

I am convinced that the most effective forms of action are



His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan (right) offers prayers at the tomb of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., April 8. Accompanying the Prince are (l-r) Dean Lawrence Carter of the King International Chapel, Morehouse College President Walter E. Massey and SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda.

HIROMASA IKEDA VISITS ATLANTA

By JAMIE LIPTAN
STAFF WRITER

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda visited Atlanta from April 7-9 on behalf of his parents, SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda, meeting with many dignitaries and taking part in the conferment of the first Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize on His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan.

During his meeting with Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell on April 9, Vice President Ikeda expressed his appreciation for the mayor's support of the Gandhi, King, Ikeda exhibition opening on March 31. He pledged that the SGI would continue to "support the legacy of Atlanta as a great center of human rights and nonviolence."

The mayor expressed his desire that the exhibition "educate the public about nonviolence to further the teachings of Dr. Ikeda, Dr. King and Gandhi. Their message is so very important in these troubled times in the world."

Vice President Ikeda also visited the Georgia State Capitol April 9, where he met with Secretary of State Cathy Cox. Secretary Cox led a ceremony conferring honorary Georgia citizenship on Presi-



SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda (left) meets with Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell in the mayor's office, April 9.

dent and Mrs. Ikeda. "We are so impressed with the work of Dr. Ikeda and his wife," she said. "We wish them much success as they open the new Soka University of America campus in California. We are proud to call them honorary

Georgia citizens."

Morehouse College President Walter Massey, during a discussion with Vice President Ikeda, thanked the SGI for its support of the college's Gandhi Institute for Reconciliation and the conferment of the Gandhi,

King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize. "We are gratified that Morehouse College can serve as a conduit for Dr. Ikeda's message through this prize and exhibition," he said. President Massey also expressed his appreciation for the

gift of hundreds of books from President Ikeda to the college.

Vice President Ikeda then flew to Los Angeles to review the progress of construction at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo before returning to Tokyo. **WT**

FROM MESSAGE, 8

those based on a profound inner awareness of how we want to live our lives—how we must live our lives if we are to be true to ourselves. In the end, only efforts to confront social ills that arise from a total personal commitment will move the hearts of others and give rise to a movement capable of transforming the course of history.

The struggle waged by Soka Gakkai founding president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, and second president, Josei Toda, is the inspiration for the SGI's peace movement. Their struggle was based on a profound commitment, rooted in their Buddhist faith, to work for the rights, happiness and freedom of all people.

Makiguchi and Toda held high the banner of justice and humanity as they confronted head-on Japan's militaristic fascism, which was tightening its policies of domestic suppression—trampling underfoot citizens' inalien-

able rights—even as it carried out acts of aggression and unspeakable atrocity against Japan's neighbors. In the confines of his prison cell, Makiguchi remained utterly faithful to his beliefs to the moment of his death. Toda resisted and survived two years of confinement.

My own commitment to engage in dialogue with the world's people, to create a society that rejects war and violence in all forms, likewise grows from the inexhaustible inspiration I derive from the example of my predecessors.

It is our duty to pass on the spiritual awakening of Gandhi and King.

To make the 21st century into a century of life, to create a new current of history, requires a clear guiding philosophy. "All life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny"—this was the inner voice that arose within

Dr. King as an unwavering conviction over the course of his travels to India to study Gandhi's nonviolence movement.

All forms of life are inseparably related and it is within this web of interconnection that each individual life shines with the utmost dignity. In Buddhism this is referred to as dependent origination—the understanding that all forms of life come into being through mutually supportive and sustaining relationships.

A profound reverence for the sanctity of all life bolstered Dr. King's efforts to rise above all differences that divide humans against each other, to challenge social ills and injustice wherever he found them. It was from this shining throne of insight that he declared "justice is indivisible."

The lineage of modern nonviolence can be traced from Henry David Thoreau and his study of Eastern thought to Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It has grown

into a vast movement that has transformed our world, as symbolized by the nonviolent democratic revolutions that have swept the globe, starting in the Philippines and Eastern Europe a little more than a decade ago.

The spiritual awakening which we have the great fortune to have encountered—and which it is our duty to pass on—cannot be limited to a single country or historical era. The struggle of the inner forces of goodness against the dark forces of brutality, violence and barbarism knows no national or temporal boundaries; it will continue into the infinite future.

A Buddhist scripture states, "If the spring is inexhaustible, the stream will never run dry." We must never let the copious flow of the awakened spirit run dry. We must ceaselessly refresh its springs, sharing and conveying it to the generations who will shoulder the challenges and promise of the future.

Toward this end, together

with our friends gathered here today, heirs to the noble spirit of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I pledge to continue to work without end to make the 21st century shine as a century of life and human rights, to create a world in which there are only winners.

Next month, in May, the Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo campus will open in Orange County, Calif. As we continue to learn and draw inspiration from the esteemed example of Morehouse College, we are resolved to foster a succession of world citizens awakened to a truly global consciousness. Through the power of education, we are determined to pave the way toward a new culture of peace.

Finally, I close this message with my heartfelt prayers for the continued well-being and success of all our respected friends.

April 8, 2001
Daisaku Ikeda

When We Face Disappointment

A Message
FROM MATILDA

By **MATILDA BUCK**
SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER

Ever feel defeated? 'It is in this moment of very human emotion,' Matilda Buck says, 'that we can profoundly strengthen our faith. Faith that is not challenged doesn't have a chance to grow.'

One of my favorite letters from Nichiren Daishonin, and one of the shortest and most humanistic, is "Happiness in This World." In just two paragraphs, the Daishonin tells us that we all have the power of the Buddha within our lives. It is with that self-identity, he says, that we should view the events in our lives. He also tells us that strengthening our faith is the key to happiness: "There is no true happiness other than upholding faith in the Lotus Sutra. This is what is meant by 'peace and security in their



SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck with a women's leader from India on an SGI training trip in Japan, November 2000.

present existence and good circumstances in future existences.' Though worldly troubles may arise, never let them disturb you. No one can avoid problems, not even sages or worthies" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 681).

But what do we do when we are disturbed by our "worldly troubles"? It may be that we prayed and made every effort toward a certain goal, but did not achieve it. It may be that some heart-wrenching problem has recurred. Sometimes we are so disturbed that we don't even want to chant or talk to anyone. It is only human to feel disappointment, hurt, loss of hope—

even betrayal.

I believe it is in this moment of very human emotion that we can profoundly strengthen our faith. Faith that is not challenged doesn't have a chance to grow. The secret is to seize that moment of suffering and disappointment from the perspective of a Bodhisattva of the Earth and do something great.

It takes courage to change our mindset, but we can. "Attaining 'peace and security in this life' doesn't mean having a life free from all difficulties," SGI President Ikeda tells us, "but that whatever difficulties arise, without being shaken in the least, you can summon up the unflinching courage and conviction to fight against and overcome them. This is the state of life of 'peace and security in this life'" (*Learning from the Goshu*, p. 241).

Recently, a young woman in the Midwest applied for admission to Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo. At first, she was reluctant, but eventually she put her heart into the application. It was a challenge in every sense of the word. When she wasn't accepted, it

was a blow. She thought to herself: "It must be for the best. After all, everything is a benefit." But in her heart was a whole different message, one of stinging rejection. Her confidence spiraled downward, her self-image crumbled. As she chanted about the situation, righteous anger began to seethe. "I really worked hard," she recalled with a defiant sense of pride. The result was that she cemented her resolve to find the deeper meaning of what she was experiencing. She wouldn't settle for defeat. That attitude alone is a victory. She doesn't know the final outcome yet, but her mindset is one of seeking.

A young man in California was sure he would be accepted to SUA, AV. He was stunned when it didn't happen. Was he misled? Was he wrong about the direction he thought his life would go? One thing was for sure—this experience made him realize that he had had a very narrow view of his future. Avenues are beginning to open that he'd never recognized before.

This is not the first time (nor will it be the last) that these young people have faced disappointment. When I see how they respond, how they deal with their disappointment, how they become stronger individuals with a clearer sense of purpose, it fills me with hope as well. As the Daishonin says, "No one can avoid problems"—so it's not a question of eliminating disappointment from our lives, but rather using it to deepen our faith and strengthen our self-identity.

I would like to share some guidance from SGI Vice President Yasunori Takimoto and his wife, Suzuko. I asked them how they both overcame fourth-

stage cancer, and they described four determinations that they made. I realized that the heart of their message addresses all obstacles: illness, relationships, work and, of course, our own internal battles, like disappointment or hopelessness.

- 1) Through this experience, I will become someone who does not doubt the Gohonzon, no matter what happens.
- 2) As a Bodhisattva of the Earth, I have the mission to experience this, and as a Bodhisattva of the Earth, I have the mission to create a victory.
- 3) I will share the power of Buddhism with others, even as I grapple with this experience.
- 4) I won't let my spirits stay down. I won't make a place in my life for negativity to settle.

I want to comment on the last point about making a place for negativity in our lives. Feeling depressed, hurt or feeling rejected are natural human feelings, especially in response to a setback. But how we process them is important. If we see something disappointing as evidence that we can't win and we then feel it is emblematic of our whole life, we are making a home for negativity to settle. It's better to take the situation and isolate it—to put it in quarantine. We can say: "Yes, I'm disappointed about this situation, but it is not the totality of my life. I will chant about it, it will not pull my entire spirit down."

These points may seem simple, but they are hard to master. When we do, and when we take the perspective of a Bodhisattva of the Earth, we will find tremendous meaning in all we experience. Most important, we will become people who truly experience peace and security, because every setback becomes a step forward, and every disappointment becomes a source of the most profound growth and strength. **WT**

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the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 41-42

'As you know, Nichiren Daishonin states that we "voluntarily choose to be born in evil circumstances so that we may help others," says Shin'ichi Yamamoto. "In other words, we deliberately made the negative causes that destined us to be born into this defiled age so that we could help all living beings become truly happy.'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto turned to General Director Koichi Harayama, who was also serving as a member of the Upper House of the Japanese parliament, and said: "Don't you think that politicians should listen closely to such problems and wrack their brains to come up with good solutions? Representatives of the Clean Government Group in particular should never overlook even a single cry for help from among the people." Shin'ichi then asked Takashi Nogawa, the Amami Oshima general chapter leader, "Are there any other problems besides *habu* snakes?"

"Yes," replied Nogawa. "Typhoons. So many typhoons hit Amami that it is called Typhoon Alley. We suffer enormous damage every year."

"This is also an area where the government should think of various ways to assure the public's safety and security," Shin'ichi said. "But the fundamental solution to these problems lies in the determined prayers of the members."

"Buddhism teaches that the mind encompasses the entire universe. When we change our innermost state of mind, our whole being changes, and this affects the world in which we live. This is the teaching of the oneness of life and its environment, and the principle of a single life-moment possessing three thousand realms. This means that if more and more people start chanting with determined prayer, even the most difficult of situations will change."

"Everything starts with a strong determination. Such determination may inspire us to research ways of protecting the home or find out what kind of

crops are most likely to survive a typhoon, for example. This determination can also move the government. Our duty, our mission, is to make the place we live a Land of Eternally Tranquil Light, a realm of happiness and peace. I hope the members here in the Amami Islands will be pioneers in this endeavor."

After sightseeing, Shin'ichi headed for Ryuan-ji, the temple where the men's division group leaders meeting was to be held. It had been built and donated to Nichiren Shoshu by the Soka Gakkai in December 1959, when there were only a few members living in the Amami Islands. Believing it would be a great source of strength for future kosen-rufu activities, Shin'ichi had proposed its establishment. The Soka Gakkai had always given the construction of temples and the growth of Nichiren Shoshu top priority, even if it meant delaying the construction of Soka Gakkai facilities.

However, the priesthood later took advantage of the Soka Gakkai's sincerity and, intending to exploit the membership, excommunicated Shin'ichi, their staunchest supporter, setting into motion a contemptible plot to disband the organization. The offense committed by these priests will never be erased.

Thus, decades after its establishment, Ryuan-ji became a stronghold for the attempted destruction of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in the Amami Islands. Such malice is like a cancer. The longer it is left untreated, the farther it will spread, until it finally destroys life. That is why it is so important to challenge injustice and wrongdoing. It is the only way to protect the realm of good and to secure the correct path of faith.



Illustration by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

At the men's division group leaders meeting, Shin'ichi spoke of the sense of commitment and responsibility required of leaders. He was profoundly aware of the hardships faced by the inhabitants of the Amami Islands, and he knew how difficult it was for the members there to do Soka Gakkai activities. Yet, without the continuous spread of the Daishonin's teachings, the fate of Amami would not be changed and happiness for the people could not be realized. That is why Shin'ichi chose to talk about the attitude of those taking the lead in activities for kosen-rufu.

"Thank you for all your hard work every day. The challenges you face geographically, economically, and in trying to share the Daishonin's Buddhism amid deep-seated local traditions must be overwhelming. As you know, the Daishonin states that we 'voluntarily choose to be born in evil circumstances so that we may help others' (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 243). In other words, we deliberately made the negative causes that destined us to be born into this defiled age so that we could help all living beings become truly happy."

"Buddhism teaches that we appeared in the Latter Day of the Law to propagate the Daishonin's Buddhism as Bodhisattvas of the Earth. This means that all of you volunteered to be born here in the Amami Islands. Well aware that this place is frequently struck by typhoons, has poisonous snakes, is difficult to get around and suffers economically, you accepted the karmic burden and appeared here as Bodhisattvas

of the Earth with a vow to work for kosen-rufu.

"If you are complaining that these circumstances are not what you expected, that they are more than you bargained for, then you are not yet demonstrating the real essence of your mission. You will in that case be unable to manifest your innate power and wisdom, which means you will not break through your problems. Only when you have a firm awareness of your mission to accomplish kosen-rufu are you a true Bodhisattva of the Earth. Then, as you strive to fulfill your mission, your eternal self will take over and boundless strength and wisdom will well forth, enabling you to surmount all obstacles."

The men's division group leaders listened intently as Shin'ichi spoke. Looking directly at each person, he continued: "Today I would like to talk about what will prevent our achievement of kosen-rufu. It is not the harshness of our circumstances or our environment, but the complacency of leaders and their willingness to give up. When leaders start thinking: 'My area has accomplished so much. There is nothing more we can do,' or 'We set a goal, but if we can't reach it, then so be it,' then they have already lost the battle."

"A strong determination is the driving force for victory. If that is lost, defeat is the only option."

(This concludes "Securing the Foundation," chapter 1 of Volume 8 of *The New Human Revolution*.)

Daisaku Ikeda appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1963.

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THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

'The Peaks of Guilin'

The boat moved downstream amid the gray, misty landscape, looking like part of a Chinese ink painting. On both shores of the river appeared in succession—as if the scroll of such a painting were being unrolled—wonderful, mysterious rocky shapes. An old Chinese tale tells of a man who disappears into his own landscape painting. I imagined myself to be that man as we traveled down the river in Guilin.

Peaks pointed like paint brushes, rocks resembling a saber or a mallow flower, and Longtou-shan, “Dragon Head Mountain,” with its two horn-shaped peaks—there unfolded the great panorama of myriad summits jutting aloft in grandeur and grace.

It was a spring drizzle. Our guide said, “Guilin is most beautiful in the mist and rain.” Mountains faded in the hazy skies, their greenery suspended in midair. The beauty of those mountains and the river conveyed nature’s spirit. The Earth, a master painter of this magnificent scenery, her divine brush knowing no artifice, cleansed the viewer’s inner vision and carried his soul on a flight into the vast skies.

The day was April 26, 1980. My fifth visit to China was already more than half complete. We drove from the city of Guilin to a town called Yangti, and then walked for a while on a narrow path through a bamboo forest to a pier on the shore of the Li River.

When we were on the riverbank, several children came over. Two girls were peddling Chinese herbal medicines, carrying their articles for sale suspended from poles balanced on their shoulders. They called out: “We have every kind of medicine. Please choose whatever you wish!”

They were probably assisting with their family business. With plaits of hair hanging down unadorned, their eyes sparkled with serenity. I pointed at my forehead and said with smile, “Do you have a medicine to make my brain smarter?”

With a composed smile, one of the girls replied, “We just sold out of that.” Bright laughter broke out around us.

Impressed by her witty reply, I said, “That’s very unfortunate for me and my traveling companions.”

Afterward my wife and I bought many of their herbs as souvenirs. I wonder how those bright girls are doing now.

Our boat glided along on the exquisite jade-green surface of the Li River. About this splendid scenery was once sung, “The river flows—a sash of blue-green silk; the mountains lay—jade beads adorning

a headdress.” The peaks stood like rows of painted screens. Out of the woods flew a bird, followed by two more. The wingtips of a swallow sliced the air just above the surface of the water.

In contrast with the poetry of the verdant landscape outside, a tense discussion continued aboard. At that time, hostility between China and the Soviet Union was growing. Soviet aggression in Afghanistan near the end of the previous year had further intensified China’s criticism.



Some members of the Chinese delegation did not think favorably of my visits to both nations to promote friendship. They told me that although I was building a bridge between China and Japan, if I continued to visit the Soviet Union, Japan’s relationship with China would be seen as disingenuous. They asked me not to visit the Soviet Union anymore.

While I appreciated their frank opinion, I could not agree. I said: “I understand your sentiment. The times, however, are changing rapidly. Before the 21st century, we must set the course for all of humanity in the direction of peace. This is not a time for powerful nations to be caught up in mutual enmity and hatred. Eliciting good from one another to build harmony and supporting one another to create a new era—such humanistic approaches are what is most needed.”

Progress, however, did not come easily. The Chinese delegates continued to dwell on the same question: Which is more important, China or the Soviet Union?

Meanwhile, the beautiful scenery continued to float by outside, unpredictable, constantly changing. If I looked away, an entirely different scene would come into my view moments later. Likewise, the course of history cannot be judged solely by what is presently before our eyes.

The Li River flows unceasingly around many bends and curves into the Gui River, which, in turn, joins the mighty Zhu before it drains into the South

China Sea. No one can stop the flow of time; it keeps moving toward the ocean of humanity where all peoples are united.

I kept speaking with earnestness: “I love China dearly. China is so important. At the same time, I love humanity. Thinking of humanity as a whole is essential. The Soviet leadership gave me a promise that they would never attack China, which I related to the Chinese leadership. My sole wish is for friendship between your two countries. I sincerely

hope that you will someday understand my thoughts and feelings.”

Less than 10 years later, the conflict between China and the Soviet Union ended. Indeed, the Soviet Union no longer exists. The current of history seems to change everything. What remains constant, however, is the strength and vitality of the people living with faith in tomorrow.

Beyond the banks of the river now stretched a rustic, pastoral scene. I was told that it was rice-planting season. Some people were doing laundry by the river while others washed vegetables. I saw sheep and

water buffaloes. A fisherman and his flock of fishing birds were resting by the water.

As the riverboat continued downstream through its picturesque setting, the rain stopped unnoticed. The spring rain turned to misty clouds, enveloping the mountain peaks. By the time we reached the town of Yangshuo, the destination of our river trip, the sun broke through. The river water started to glitter a pale green, reflecting inverted mountains. The boat smoothly moved from one floating peak to the next upon the jade-green water.

Traveling the Li River is beautiful in the sun as well as in rain or fog, it is said. In our short boat trip, we saw the river’s many faces. Alighting on the pier at Yangshuo, I glanced once again at the Li River flowing in splendid spring colors.

This area was the bottom of an ocean 300 million years ago. An underwater palace of prehistoric times surfaced to form the mountain range of Guilin. Compared to the eternal flow of time, even a thousand years pass as swiftly as a galloping horse.

Against the currents of ageless time, one riverboat sailed upstream to the city of Guilin, its image an endearing reminder of the ordinary people of China, who live each precious moment with all their might. With prayer for the great happiness of my friends in China, I clicked the shutter of my camera.

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