



**People of Culture and Wisdom —
Building an Oasis of Hope, Trust
and Friendship in Society**

*Selected Encouragement from
SGI President Daisaku Ikeda*

SGI-USA Culture Department

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PREFACE

Josei Toda, second president of the Soka Gakkai, established the Culture Department in 1954 with the realization that the kosen rufu movement was more than simply expanding the membership of the Soka Gakkai. President Toda's grand view was much larger; individuals who have experienced their own self-revolution will enable a fundamental change in all sectors of society's culture – legal, educational, economic, medical, and philosophical. In all of these fields, Soka Gakkai members, having revolutionized their lives, will infuse fresh energy into the life of contemporary society and display their abilities as Bodhisattvas of the Earth, creating great waves of change. In President Toda's far-reaching vision, it was natural then that this religious movement should find its way into all of society's divergent spheres. Clearly, the Culture Department members have a unique role in fulfilling this purpose.

For over 50 years, Daisaku Ikeda, President Toda's disciple, has promoted humanism and peace throughout the world, based on his mentor's vision to create a humanistic culture in society. When he established the SGI-USA Culture Department in 1990, he did so with the desire to produce capable people who, with faith and intellect, would be essential in creating a humanistic culture in America.

Culture Department members today are demonstrating the validity of Nichiren Buddhism in society, a point President Ikeda has consistently emphasized. The Culture Department members' patient and sincere commitment to this goal has resulted in showing actual proof through their important contributions within their professions. President Ikeda has referred to Culture Department members as great generals of kosen-rufu, who are engaged "in our struggle for the peace and happiness of all humanity." Furthermore, he reminds us of our mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth, who are dedicated to promoting our movement of peace, culture and education based upon Buddhism while assuming vital responsibility in our respective realms of society.

In recognition of the 19th anniversary of President Ikeda establishing the SGI-USA Culture Department, the Culture Department leaders have compiled President Ikeda's words of encouragement with the hope that this collection will provide inspiration to those who are gaining trust and respect in their community, professional spheres, and society as a whole. While we have attempted to provide as much encouragement as could be found, we recognize that this is a living document and that additional encouragement will be found. For this reason, we will rely primarily on various electronic means for sharing this booklet and future updates of President Ikeda's encouragement to the Culture Department members.

We hope that you will find this booklet a vital source of inspiration as you continue to demonstrate the greatness of Nichiren Buddhism in your respective professions. Let us manifest our full capabilities in our respective fields "with the effectiveness of more than one thousand other individuals, carrying out successful activities in your individual battlefields of kosen-rufu as a 'practice-first general of wisdom.'"

SGI-USA Culture Department leaders

February 17, 2009

THE SGI-USA CULTURE DEPARTMENT BEGINS

Origins of the Culture Department

The Human Revolution, *Book Two, Volume 9, "New Growth," pp. 1212-1217. [The events described were set in 1954]*

[p. 1212] The Otaru Debate had ended in glorious victory for the Soka Gakkai – one rightfully deserved. But to Josei Toda the debate had merely been incidental.

It was surprising the affair should have grown to such enormous proportions on a remote northern island, and in a city where the organization's strength was still negligible. In those days, Soka Gakkai members were confronting other schools in many parts of the country. Reports of clashes frequently reached the Headquarters; they had become almost commonplace. Yet the head-on collision in Otaru was different. It alone burst into such a brilliant incident in the history of the Soka Gakkai. This was something Toda had not expected.

He promptly responded to the incident, worked out appropriate countermeasures and made deliberate preparations. The result was a perfect victory. Yet now that the Otaru debate was over, he reacted less than if a typhoon had just passed through. Since the autumn of the previous year, an idea had taken possession of his thinking. The thought spread its roots, and had now begun to bud. It was a conception of a new phase of activity. Should he put the plan into action now or await some more propitious time? He found himself forced to make a decision.

The time had come, he told himself.

Yet, on second thought, it still seemed a bit premature. The membership stood at only a little more than one hundred eighty thousand households. He should not overreach himself. Toda sank into deep meditation.

He asked Koichi Harayama, the leader to the Statistics Department, to prepare an accurate map showing the distribution of Soka Gakkai members throughout Japan. The density was greatest in Tokyo and the surrounding Kanto district. Sendai and Akita in the Tohoku (northeast) district, Hakodate in Hokkaido, Sakai in the Kansai (western) district and Yame in the Kyushu were also heavily represented.

Then he had the statistics staff obtain detailed data on the returns of the previous nationwide local elections and collate them with the distribution map. After the collation, rough as it was, the map came to Toda with dozens of circles marked on it. Each circle indicated an area in which some suitable Soka Gakkai member, should he run for local elections and be supported by the members living in that community, might possibly be elected. Many regions had become possibilities without anyone noticing it. The situation demanded Toda's decision.

Kosen-rufu is not simply a campaign for expanding the membership of the Soka Gakkai.

Members embrace the Gohonzon and devote themselves to the practice of faith. It is only fitting that first of all, as human beings, they should change their own lives. Individuals who have changed their own lives will also improve their destiny and cause a reform in their families. A group of such individuals will naturally cause a fundamental change in the local community. Not only in the local community; they will spread out to all sectors of society--- political, economic and industrial, as well as educational, culture, scientific and philosophical. In all of these fields, Soka Gakkai members, having revolutionized their lives, will display their abilities in their activities, creating great waves of change. These waves will gradually form a new tide surging toward the future, eventually leading to a change in the destiny of all humankind. This, Toda decided, should be the true activity of kosen-rufu based on the Mystic Law.

He often spoke to the leaders about this, but they only listened politely, as if it were just a dream. Now, less than four years after becoming president and launching full-scale activities for kosen-rufu, he realized that the young buds he had awaited were beginning to open.

On November 22, 1954, Toda announced the establishment of a Culture Department and appointed Minoru Suzumoto as its leader and only member. Although it was so far a one-man department, Toda had great expectations for it. He studied various data and deliberated on ways to make the new division work effectively. The new buds had sprouted almost spontaneously, but if no one cared for them, they could only wither and die. Toda resolved to bring them up under his care.

[p.1215] “Brace yourself. The time will certainly come when the success or failure of the Culture Department will determine the victory or defeat of the movement for kosen-rufu. Yours is truly an important task. A new growth has now begun. The public is still completely unaware of it. Even the other leaders of the Soka Gakkai will not easily understand the true significance of this step.”

[p. 1216] “Among those who practice Nichiren Buddhism, there must be some whose quality demands that they extend their activities to various fields of society. Now the time has come. No matter where you are or what the age, never forget that you are members of the Culture Department, in whose bosom resides the Mystic Law. I hope that you will live among the people, fight for the people and die among the people. Everyone in our society longs for the appearance of true statesmen who have no desire for fame and profit. I trust you; you are the very people capable of fulfilling their wishes. Fight your battle splendidly. I will not begrudge you anything. Whatever fate may await you, advance throughout your lives with the pride that you are members of the Culture Department of the Soka Gakkai. No matter what, never betray our expectations!”

[p. 1217] Kosen-rufu is a movement based on religious revolution that aims to benefit the whole of humanity from this moment on into the eternal future. It is Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism that must infuse fresh energy into the life of contemporary society. It was natural that this religious movement should find its way into all of society's divergent spheres. Toda often spoke of this far-reaching vision at meetings of the Suiko-kai and in conversations with top leaders. But it was such an extraordinarily revolutionary plan that few could consider it a real possibility. They were merely awed by the grandeur of it all, like some utopian dream.

In just more than two decades since that time, the movement for kosen-rufu would take on a global aspect. Now, in retrospect, we realize that the Culture Department's initiation was truly an epoch-making step in the history of humankind. To say the least, it was a project unimagined in the seven hundred-year history of Nichiren Buddhism.

Because the Soka Gakkai members devoted themselves to turning Buddhist principles into reality within all strata of people, all walks of life and all age groups, it was, in a word, society itself. The Culture Department was, therefore, never intended to keep to the limited confines of the political realm. Its purpose was far greater--to extend into every field of society.

The New Human Revolution, Volume 4, Chapter Two "Triumph," pp. 119-160. [The events described were set in 1961]

[pp 119] Announced next was an expansion and strengthening of the Soka Gakkai's organizational structure. The Culture Department would be upgraded to a Culture Bureau incorporating departments of politics, economics, education and journalism, and charged with the mission of working for the creation of a new cultural tradition.

If Buddhism cultivates the soil of human life, then it follows that it will also support the flowering of humanistic culture. The value of religion is revealed in its ability to generate a renaissance of culture. The establishment of the Culture Bureau heralded the start of the Gakkai's broad cultural movement.

[pp 157-160] Shin'ichi was always strict in his guidance to top leaders. This was because the entire responsibility for the Soka Gakkai rested on their shoulders.

Next on the agenda for discussion were the activities of the Culture Bureau, which had been inaugurated at the May 3 general meeting. In addition to his other responsibilities, youth division chief and director Eisuke Akizuki had been appointed to head the writers department within the Culture Bureau.

Shin'ichi turned to him and asked, "How is the activity plan for the writers department coming along?"

“Yes, we’re still looking into that,” Akizuki replied, looking apologetic.

Shin’ichi shot back in a stern tone: “That’s too slow. Our purpose in forming the writers department is clear, so you should already be coming up with concrete plans and discussing things with me if there’s a problem. Just standing by until I give you instructions is irresponsible. If youth are passive, they will lose in their struggles in society. Being reprimanded for something when you’ve actively done your best is no disgrace, but being reprimanded when you haven’t done anything out of fear of failing is shameful.”

“I’m sorry,” Akizuki replied. “What happened was that our executive staff was split on the direction the writers department should take. As a result, we couldn’t reach a consensus on an activity plan. One view is that the department should comprise authors and screenwriters who are presently active in their fields, to provide them an opportunity to develop their faith. Another view is that the department should aim broadly to educate many young people as writers and journalists for the future. I was hoping to get your opinion as to which focus the writers department should take.”

“Both are necessary,” Shin’ichi said. “We have to raise great authors who possess a solid grounding in the Daishonin’s Buddhism. At the same time, it is important to develop each member of the youth division to be an accomplished writer and speaker. From now on, it will be increasingly important for leaders to have good writing and speaking skills. If those who become top youth division leaders can neither write a speech nor an article, nor speak persuasively, they cannot hope to lead society.

“In that respect, too, youth division leaders should not simply entrust such activities to a select group of specially trained individuals; rather, they should ensure that all members hone their general abilities as speakers and writers. In light of that, why don’t you adopt a dual structure: one section comprising youth division leaders and another consisting of professional writers?”

Shin’ichi’s thinking was very flexible in this regard. In an instant, Akizuki’s worries about the direction of the new the department were resolved.”

“Shin’ichi next asked about the education department, which was headed by the women’s division chief and director, Katsu Kiyohara.

Kiyohara outlined the progress of preparation to set up the department, and said:

“We’ve asked each local organization to provide us with the names and addresses of any members in the teaching profession. Once we have finished compiling our list – which shouldn’t take long – we will contact those individuals. At this stage, we’re hoping to hold the department’s first meeting in June, the month of President Makiguchi’s birth.”

“That’s a good idea,” Shin’ichi responded. “Let’s hold it at the Gakkai Headquarters. President Makiguchi began his struggles to save people from misery by advocating education reform. And he found the philosophy that would provide the underpinnings for his educational theories in Nichiren

Daishonin's Buddhism. At the most fundamental level, Buddhism is the highest form of humanistic education. I think that education also will be my final undertaking.

“Japan is certainly becoming affluent. But delinquency and other problems involving young people are becoming increasingly severe. This is because the nation, the schools and teachers lack a clear philosophy of how to go about educating human beings. I fear for Japan's future and for the twenty-first century if things continue as they are.

“Providing good facilities and a proper environment is certainly important to education. But teachers themselves are the most crucial aspect of a child's educational environment. The education department of the Soka Gakkai must develop those teachers.

Message to the SGI-USA Culture Department Members, January 30, 1999

In 1990, during the opening of a new era for American kosen-rufu, I formed the SGI-USA Culture Department. This was because I firmly believed that producing promising capable people equipped with faith and intellect would be vital for the development of America.

As we approach the 21st Century, I would like each of you to deeply confirm this fundamental reason for the department's formation by fostering a steady stream of capable people, in your land of freedom, who are brimming with hope.

I ask each of you, who are taking leadership for the next generation, to study Buddhism more deeply and seriously than ever before. Also, side by side with the members, please broaden the circle of dialogue filled with sincere encouragement and assiduously polish your compassion and wisdom.

I am look forward to meeting all of you, capable people of shining intellect, in the United States soon.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO EDUCATORS DIVISION

Ties of Trust

The New Human Revolution, *Volume 20, chapter 3*, World Tribune 6/13/2008, p. B

The construction of lasting world peace; cooperation between peoples; reciprocity and equality between nations; and the creation of a society in which all people can live lives of true dignity- all of these endeavors rest on the foundation of education. I firmly believe that education is the wellspring of human culture that enriches society with fresh vitality and energy for dynamic progress.

Teacher's Art

http://www.sgi.org/english/sgi_president/works/essays/TEACHER.html

I believe that education is what remains long after the content of each specific lesson we were taught has been forgotten. The essence of education is character formation, teaching young people how to live in society and encouraging them to think independently. Study is much more than simply absorbing existing knowledge and techniques, and the ability to memorize and reason is nothing compared to the wisdom, emotional richness and creativity within every human being.

I believe that the genuine goal of education must be the life-long happiness of those who learn. Education should never be subordinated to the demands of national ego, or corporations searching for profit-generating employees. Human beings, human happiness, must always be the goal and objective.

The relationship between teacher and pupil can be a vital link through which new horizons are opened up and life develops. To me, the essence of education is this process of one person's character inspiring another. When teachers become partners in the process of discovery, burning with a passion for truth, the desire to learn will naturally be ignited in their students' hearts. And once children feel that their teachers are genuinely concerned for their individual welfare, they will begin to trust and open up to them.

Teachers who do not understand and care for their students, giving stereotyped answers, cannot possibly satisfy children's curious and sensitive minds. It must never be forgotten that the most important people in a school are its students.

I once heard about a Japanese elementary school teacher who was irritated by a girl in his class who was unable to keep up. He gave up trying to help her after a fellow teacher told him, "Human beings are just like fruit; twenty to thirty percent is always worthless and there's nothing you can do about it." Then, one day during a break, he noticed her playing with a puzzle, trying to put plastic pieces together so they fit into a box. Finally she succeeded and yelled, "I got it!" her face sparkling with delight he had never seen before. The teacher suddenly felt remorse. How dare he give up on her! Wasn't it his job to

make sure that each child walked out of his classroom with the confidence that they could do anything if they really tried?

He discovered that the girl's parents, both graduates of leading universities, were constantly calling her "stupid." The teacher resolved to praise her every day, for every little accomplishment, to wash away the stain of criticism from her heart.

After a year, the girl was transformed. Proceeding at her own pace, she came to experience the joy of learning. The key was her realization that if she made an effort to achieve something, she could do it.

This story shows how the smallest failure can destroy a child's confidence, and the smallest catalyst can trigger growth. It is vital that teachers believe in every child's potential and care about their happiness as human beings.

The Treasure of Life Shines Equally in All People

World Tribune 02/28/03, p.2

The French educator Jean-Henri Fabre, renowned for his studies of the insect world recorded in his 10-volume work *Souvenirs entomologiques*, was inspired in his efforts by a profound love of humankind. Teaching science in junior, middle and high schools for some 30 years, he dedicated himself to the spiritual struggle that is education. The classes he conducted were vibrant and inspired; he drew the hearts and interests of the students like a magnet.

The idea that the will to learn, the joy of learning, could be dulled and extinguished by lifeless textbooks designed only for the cramming of facts was, for Fabre, completely intolerable. "Science is a garden," he writes in one letter, "surrounded by formidable walls, the tops of which are strewn with shards of broken bottles. For the sake of the children, I wish to break down these walls and hurl those shards back at the demons. This I will without fail do!" Let us tear down the walls put up by misguided approaches to education! Fabre's heartfelt appeal parallels the conviction and belief that moved Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the father of Soka education, the pedagogy of value creation. Makiguchi expressed these sentiments in his work *The System of Value-Creation Pedagogy*. "I am driven," he writes, "by the intense desire to prevent the present deplorable situation—of 10 million of our children and students forced to endure the agonies of cutthroat competition, the difficulty of getting into good schools, 'examination hell' and the struggle for jobs after graduation—from afflicting the next generation." The refusal to accept education as something defined by authority, the determination to unleash children's inherent capacity to realize happiness—these intense desires drove Makiguchi's quest. Therein is the font from which Soka education flows, therein the spiritual legacy to which we are heirs. It is the succession of this spirit that binds us, making us inseparable.

Here also is the mission and challenge of Soka education: to tap the boundless potential inherent in each person, to help move humanity in the direction of goodness and harmony. Through dialogue with a wide range of thinkers and scholars, I have sought to establish a global network of education and friendship. These efforts are rooted in my conviction that education for global citizenship—education based on an authentic humanism—represents the vital foundation for a culture of peace for all humanity.

The Times Call for Education

World Tribune 06/06/03, p.2

Teachers and students should join in the pursuit of truth and in creating value. Doing so, they will form strong ties of mutual trust and respect as companions in learning—ties that surpass even those of parent and child. This is the starting point of education and learning. Education, naturally, is the foundation for human development. It is the basis of happiness and peace. I am determined once again to stir a fresh wave of education, to forge an even stronger network of educational and academic cooperation and exchange around the world, in order to build a new age in which respect for the sanctity of life takes center stage.

We cannot win in life on our own. We cannot grow on our own. That is why we have schools — that is why we have friends. Human beings only fully exist in their relations with others.

Teachers and students are equals. Neither is above or below the other. In the pursuit of learning, it is vital that we engage in earnest dialogue as fellow human beings, for the sake of peace, happiness and good—discussing at length, asking each other’s opinions and respecting each other’s ideas. This, I believe, is the true path of learning.

Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship

Delivered at Teachers College, Columbia University, June 13, 1996

<http://www.daisakuiked.org/index.php?mid=resources&sub=works&sub2=lect&quid=3>

It is my abiding conviction that it is the teacher dedicated to serving students, and not the inanimate facility, that makes a school... Students' lives are not changed by lectures, but by people. For this reason, interactions between students and teachers are of the greatest importance. We learn from people and it is for this reason that the humanity of the teacher represents the core of the educational experience."

Nature as an Excellent Teacher-Rousseau’s Emile

Living Buddhism, 7/1/2006, p. 106

I do not remember the details of our conversation at that time, but he (Toda) once told me that his mentor, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, liked to read Rousseau as well. In his lifework *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei*

(Value-creating Educational Theory), Mr. Makiguchi often referred to Rousseau. For example, in discussing ways to reform education, he writes, “This clinging to outmoded, wasteful educational policies and practices can be observed in both East and West, and it is only thanks to the insistence of such revolutionary educators as Rousseau, Comenius, and Pestalozzi that youth today have a lighter sentence to serve in the prison of meaningless studies. In his work, Mr. Makiguchi condemns a type of education that overemphasizes intellectual knowledge as the “prison of meaningless studies.”

Part IV: School and the Study of Children Are Treasures of the Future

The following are excerpts from Daisaku Ikeda’s three-volume series on parenting Dialogues on Mother and Child in the Twenty-first Century (Niju-isseiki heno haha to ko o kataru), Daisanbunmeisha, Tokyo, 1999–2000. 8/1/00 World Tribune, p.4.

Overcoming Problems at School

The school environment is just as important for children’s development as their home environment, especially since, as children grow older, they spend more time at school. Teachers should provide the kind of learning that children do not receive at home. Also, rather than placing blame when children cause problems at school, the school system and the teachers should work together with the parents to nurture and raise children.

At school, children encounter many experiences that help them become stronger. It is important that they spend time with other children so they can learn to function in group situations. When interacting with different personalities, there may be unavoidable conflicts, but these enable students to develop as human beings. Associating with children from different backgrounds is a necessary rite of passage. Sometimes, what might be considered negative from an adult’s perspective actually contributes to a child’s development. Children may misbehave or use objectionable language; they may even sound like juvenile delinquents. Nevertheless, for some children, this is a part of growing up; most of the time such behavior will eventually turn itself around and serve as a positive foundation for young lives.

Tsuneshaburo Makiguchi, the first Soka Gakkai president, held the conviction that the responsibility for education in his day needed to be wrested from government and politicians who had seized control and influenced children toward fanatical patriotism, and instead given to the teachers and parents. He believed that those who had the greatest desire to make children happy should coordinate their efforts to improve the educational system.

Nothing positive results when parents and teachers are at odds, placing blame on one another. Teachers should care for their students as if they were their own children, raising them with dedication and conviction. Parents, on the other hand, should not leave the raising of their children up to the schools. I believe that it is best to establish a cooperative relationship in which the welfare of the children is the

main focus of everyone involved.

Obtaining good grades has little to do with one's greatness as a human being. Academic accomplishment and human integrity are two separate issues. Desiring to learn is a noble pursuit, and by studying earnestly, children can polish and elevate their lives. It is important to impart to children the desire to learn for its own sake and the eagerness to improve oneself.

But if good grades and one's greatness as a human being have nothing to do with each other, then why study? Because knowledge is power! We study to become capable; we learn in order to win in life. Without study, we cannot realize our potential, especially during future crucial moments. We won't be able to realize our dreams. Individuals cannot become great without studying and exerting much effort.

"Endurance is strength." In no pursuit do we suddenly mature without having faced and persevered through challenges. To think otherwise is an illusion. Avoiding hardships while trying to reach goals is indicative of laziness and the tendency to be manipulative. Also, if we give up on our goals thinking, "I'd never make it anyway," it shows that we lack strength. Certainly, at times we feel defeated or just want to give up. We may even experience setbacks. Even if we falter a little along the way, however, we just have to renew our determination once again and persist. The ability to do so is proof of real inner strength. Mothers must patiently encourage their children so that they can bring forth their resolve to move forward. When the children advance even a step, praise them warmly with, "You did a great job" or "I knew you could do it."

Winning Gives Our Lives Meaning

World Tribune 02/22/02, p.2.

SGI President Ikeda's speech to alumni of Soka University and other Soka Schools at Soka University in Tokyo, Nov. 4, 2001.

Both Kant and President Makiguchi resolutely challenged arrogant people, whether they were politicians, clerics or scholars. Both men believed that politicians were at the service of the people and educators at the service of students. They therefore could not forgive those who would forget their duty and put on airs, as if they were better than others.

2000 Peace Proposal, A Time to Talk – Thoughts on a Culture of Peace

Living Buddhism, 05/01/2000, p.16

I would like to reemphasize the global challenge that faces us: the creation of a human society that serves the essential needs of education. When defined as those activities that foster the talents and character of human beings, "education" is in no way limited to classrooms but is a mission that must be undertaken and realized by human society as a whole. We must now go back to the original purpose of

education—children’s lifelong happiness—and reflect upon the state of our respective societies and our ways of living.

What kind of world should we build for our children to inherit? At the threshold of a new century, we have a great opportunity to seriously face these issues—and it is an opportunity we must seize.

Instead of the powerless deriving from despair, helplessness, defeatism, self-doubt, pessimism, indifference, cynicism, and apathy, we need to engage in vital, volitional, proactive, and energetic efforts—in Spinoza’s words, “virtue that springs from force of character.”

2001 Education Proposal, The Brilliance of the Inner Spirit

Living Buddhism, 07/01/2001, p.22.

The turmoil in education and the consequent darkness enveloping the lives of children point to an eroded ability to educate on the part of society as a whole and its constituent elements—not only those institutions with formal responsibility for educational and religious matters but including the family and the community.

Above all, we need courage if we are to end violence in schools--the kind of courage that will allow us neither to yield when confronted by evil nor to remain idle witnesses in the face of evil. When we muster up this kind of courage, bullying as well as all other forms of violence will inevitably be rejected.

People controlled by this state of life can grow immune to emotions of love or hatred, suffering or joy, and can retreat into a barren, makeshift world of alienation. Indifference toward evil implies indifference toward good. It makes for a bleak state of life and a semantic space estranged from the vital drama of the struggle between good and evil.

We cannot continue merely treating the symptoms of this malaise. I am not alone in believing we have reached the point at which we must opt for a comprehensive strategy. Maslow aptly raised the question of whether a “value-free education” is at all desirable. Perhaps it is time to choose a response that resonates with the spirituality and faith in the depths of the human heart.

2002 Peace Proposal, The Humanism of the Middle Way: Dawn of a Global Civilization

www.sgi.org

In this connection, I would like to make several proposals related to the UN Special Session on Children to be held this May. The purpose of this meeting is to review progress toward the goals agreed upon at the 1990 World Summit for Children. Originally scheduled for last September, its postponement was forced by the terror attacks in the United States.

When societies break down, it is always children whose lives, health and best interests are

sacrificed. There are some 2.1 billion children under the age of eighteen on Earth today. Of these, however, fewer than one in ten live in countries where their health and growth is afforded adequate protection. In the decade since the holding of the World Summit for Children, we have seen definite progress. It has been possible to reduce the number of children dying from preventable diseases and to increase the number able to receive basic education (UNICEF Bellamy).

Despite such advances, and perhaps because the plan of action adopted by the 1990 Summit was not given sufficient international attention, progress has been checkered. UNICEF has responded by initiating a global movement for children, calling for participation from governments, NGOs, educational institutions and the media. The Special Session on Children is being held within this context, and, as UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy has stated, its purpose is to clarify the link between healthy children today and a healthy world tomorrow.

2003 Peace Proposal, Toward a Life-Sized Paradigm for Our Age

Living Buddhism, 04/01/2003 p.4.

Along with disarmament and development, the third challenge for human security is that of creating a global society in which all people have access to education. Education not only enables us to live fulfilled lives; it is also the bedrock foundation of any effort to build a culture of peace. In entrenched, multigenerational conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian problem, the only viable hope for solution lies in a sustained program of education for the young.

2004 Peace Proposal, Inter-transformation: Creating a Global Groundswell for Peace

www.sgi.org

As I have stressed on many occasions, including the earlier part of this proposal, I believe that education must be the focus of efforts to extend human security. In the world today 860 million adults are said to be illiterate, and 121 million children have no access to school

The Education for All campaign, spearheaded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), aims to realize universal basic education with concrete benchmarks for achievement. Last year was also the start of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012). Literacy opens the door to knowledge, empowering people to develop their innate abilities and fulfill their potential. Raising literacy rates among women, who account for two-thirds of the illiterate, and providing girls with greater access to primary education would undoubtedly prove powerful in improving the lives not only of women but also of their families and communities. *The State of the World's Children 2004*, released by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in December 2003, warns that none of the world's development objectives can be achieved without progress in girls' education, and calls for urgent

reform of international development efforts. Lack of funding has caused many countries to fall behind in the drive for universal primary cooperation. According to estimates by the UN and the World Bank, the target of realizing primary education for all by the year 2015 could be achieved if just four days' worth of the world's annual military expenditure were diverted to education every year (*Human Security* 117-8). Universal primary education is one of the UN's eight Millennium Development Goals (UNDP). To help us move closer to it, I believe there is a definite role for a "global primary education fund" as a focus for greater international funding cooperation. Like these initiatives to ensure a basic education for all, human rights education is a cornerstone of the drive to build a world without war.

2005 Peace Proposal, Humanism Explored

Living Buddhism, 05/01/2005 p.10

When properly implemented (when it is not, that is, merely a tool for social control as was the case in pre-1945 militarist Japan), education is a powerful force for the positive transformation of individuals and society as a whole. Education for global citizenship can help transform humankind's long-standing culture of war into a culture of peace. It challenges us to fulfill our genuine potential as users of language (Latin *Homo loquens*). The United Nations can serve as a powerful coordinating focus for such efforts.

2006 Peace Proposal, A New Era of the People: Forging a Global Network of Robust Individuals

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Peace is not simply the absence of war. A truly peaceful society is one in which everyone can maximize their potential and build fulfilling lives free from threats to their dignity. As a practical initiative, I believe we must fully integrate disarmament education, in this expanded sense I have described, into the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001–10), and develop activities to this end throughout civil society. The basis for these initiatives must be a shift in our frame of reference from national to human sovereignty. Disarmament education needs to be a grassroots movement that helps to raise world citizens who are firmly committed to the interests of humankind and the planet, and to strengthen the solidarity among them. In this sense, disseminating knowledge and information about disarmament should not be an end in itself: Our greatest priority should be changing people's mindset and behavior so that they are grounded in a culture of peace. For our part, the SGI has sponsored exhibitions such as "Building a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World," and last year we opened Culture of Peace Resource Centers within our SGI-USA centers in New York and Los Angeles to support this effort. Next year, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the call made by Josei Toda (1900–58), second president of the Soka Gakkai, for the abolition of nuclear

weapons, we will promote peace activities at the community level throughout the world as we seek to transform the global culture from one of war to one of peace.

2007 Peace Proposal, Restoring the Human Connection: The First Step to Global Peace

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The broad underpinnings of the SGI's movement for peace are to be found in the humanistic philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism. As mentioned, we draw specific inspiration from Josei Toda's declaration for the abolition of nuclear weapons, and, looking back over one hundred years, from the book *Jinsei chirigaku* (The Geography of Human Life) authored by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), the founding president of the Soka Gakkai. The culminating vision of this work is of a transition from the kind of ruthless competition in which the strong prey upon the weak in pursuit of material prosperity to "humanitarian competition" where states benefit themselves by benefiting others through active engagement with the international community. When *Jinsei chirigaku* was published in 1903, imperialism and colonialism were the dominant forces in the world. But Makiguchi stressed the need to create mutually enhancing, not mutually destructive, relations among peoples: "[O]ur lives rely on the world, our home is the world, and the world is our sphere of activity." Characterizing Japan as one storefront on "Pacific Avenue," he also spoke against the policies of military expansionism that Japan was pursuing in the Korean Peninsula and China. In later years, his devoted efforts, along with those of his disciple Josei Toda, would come to fruition in his major work *Soka kyoikugaku taikei* (The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy). In this work, he elaborated a philosophy of education dedicated to the realization of happiness for oneself and others—in other words, of bringing about a new era of humanitarian competition through the power of education.

Begin by Polishing Yourself

SGI Newsletter No. 5660 (8/1/03), Title: "*Students Will Shine When Teachers Provide Light*"

The eminent French scientist Louis Pasteur received an honorary title from Moscow State University, one of Russia's most respected academic institutions. [*President Ikeda has received both an honorary doctorate and an honorary professorship from this Russian university.*]

Pasteur was also a superb educator. Regarding the role of teachers, he once wrote: "I would hope that when teachers enter the classroom they will quietly ask themselves: Today, how will I elevate the hearts and minds of my students to be higher than they were yesterday?" He had not an iota of the arrogant attitude by which some teachers merely impose knowledge on students. Elevating hearts and minds—education is truly the art of fostering human beings. Pasteur also said: "Young people become animated and are inspired by the light of the teachers who guide them. To pass on

the sacred flame to youth, it is necessary to be filled by it oneself.”

It is vital that teachers, first of all, begin by polishing themselves. They must burn the flame of passion and intellect in their own hearts. There is nothing more regrettable than to give students a lecture that lacks appeal. I want you to be excellent educators who possess not only in-depth academic knowledge but also consideration for others and a shining character.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE ACADEMIC DIVISION

The New Human Revolution, *Vol. 15, "Revitalization Chapter," World Tribune Press, 2008.*

[pp. 44-47.] On November 3, the first general meeting of Soka Gakkai Academic Division, consisting of University professors and other academics and scholars was held. Shin'ichi sent as his message a long poem titled, "The Three Martyrs of Atsuhara," which he had composed for the occasion. It was a poem about the selfless spirit of the farmer followers of Nichiren Daishonin who died upholding their beliefs during the Atsuhara Persecution in 1280.

In the dawning light at the foot of Mt. Fuji,
young leaves sparkled with dew
as children frolicked,
to the murmur of the rushing brook
and the song of the lark,
a peaceful village morn.

In these latter days, the water is muddy:
The confusion in Buddhism is like tangled strands of hemp,
And bitterness and futility fill people's hearts.
Among the farmers of Atsuhara Village
Were brave young men who deplored this.

Their names were Jinshiro of Atsuhara
And his younger brothers Yagoro and Yarokuro.

Jinshiro's short life,
Swept away like cherry blossoms in the wind.
His name left behind as an example,
An honorable champion of kosen-rufu.

The lives of three martyrs of Atsuhara
Shine with eternal brilliance.

. . . Shin'ichi's poem, "The Three Martyrs of Atsuhara" described the spirit of selfless devotion to the Law exhibited by these three farmers who were Nichiren followers. He presented it to the Soka Gakkai Academic Division hoping it would inspire them to think about the meaning of true greatness.

. . . Genuine greatness as a human being has nothing to do with one's educational background, social status, or title. Nothing is more absurd or unattractive than spiritually impoverished people who boast about such superficial measures of value and care only for appearance and their own selfish interests. Real human greatness is determined by the degree to which we work for the happiness of others and fight courageously for the sake of the Law.

1987 Peace Proposal, The superior human spirit acts as a catalyst evoking good.

In more concrete terms, the course of education for world citizens must encompass such currently vital problems as environment, development, peace and human rights. Education for peace should reveal the cruelty of war, emphasize the threat of nuclear weapons, and insist on the importance of arms reduction. Education for development must deal with the eradication of hunger and poverty and should devote attention to establishing a system of economic welfare for the approximately 500 million people who suffer from malnutrition today and to the two-thirds of the nations in the world that are impoverished. Harmony between humanity and the world of nature should be the theme of education in relation to the environment; it is vital to stimulate the most serious consideration to the extent to which nuclear explosions harm the ecosystem. Learning to respect the dignity of the individual must be the cornerstone of education in relation to human rights. In all four of these essential categories, education must go beyond national boundaries and seek values applicable to all humanity. Furthermore, to make possible the attainment of the paramount goal of peace for humankind, activities in all four areas must be conducted in a mutually interrelated fashion. In other words, world-citizen education must be inclusive, comprehensive education for peace.

1996 Peace Proposal, Toward the Third Millennium: The Challenge of Global Citizenship

Only through learning can we open the spiritual windows of humanity, releasing people from the confines of ethnic or other group-based worldviews. Ethnic identity is deeply rooted in the human unconscious, and it is crucial that it be tempered through unremitting educational efforts that encourage a more open and universal sense of humanity.

1998 Peace Proposal, Humanity and the New Millennium: From Chaos to Cosmos

It is my belief that education, in the broadest sense of the word, holds the key to meeting the challenges of global responsibility and fostering tolerance. Education does not mean coercing people to fit one rigid and unvaried mold; this is merely ideological indoctrination. Rather, true education represents the most effective means of fostering the positive potential inherent in all people: self-restraint, empathy for others and the unique personality and character of each person. To do this, education must be a personal, even spiritual encounter and interaction between human beings, between teacher and learner.

The 21st Century is the Century of Education

World Tribune, Oct. 24, 2008, p. 4. From SGI President Ikeda's September 30, 2008 Address at the 22nd Headquarters Leaders Meeting held in Tokyo.

The 21st century is the century of education. Education is the key to the future. If education goes astray, everything else will follow suit. Today, many parents are eager to have their children attend Soka University and Soka Women's College, and many students are eager to attend as well. However, if the faculty and staff become jaded, losing their passion and vitality, the schools' brilliant legacies will begin to crumble. I hope you, the faculty and staff, will always take action with a fresh, dynamic, enterprising spirit to open new paths and ensure the continued development and success of our schools.

Let's always be bright and upbeat in our interactions with young people.

A speech delivered at the third Entrance Ceremony, the first he attended, held in the university's Central Gymnasium on April 9, 1973, published as "Be Creative Individuals," To the Youthful Pioneers of Soka (Tokyo, Soka University Student Union, 2006), p. 27.

What is the basic goal of education? First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the father of value-creating education, declared that it is making children happy. One of the greatest problems of modern education is that we have lost sight of this most fundamental purpose.

Only when children feel that their teachers are genuinely concerned for their welfare do they begin to trust and open up to them. And only when teachers give serious thought and attention to their students' happiness and well-being do they begin to see the character and personality of their students, their abilities and weaknesses.

I, too, have resolved to dedicate my life to education, because I know that education determines the future and is the foundation for building peace and lasting value.

I am confident that our Academic Division members are the leading exponents of such humanistic education. Independent thought and creative work are impossible when the human spirit is subjected to restraining or distorting pressures. Inexhaustible fonts of creative thinking can only be tapped where mind and spirit can roam freely exploring all perspectives and possibilities.

But spiritual freedom does not mean spiritual license. It does not mean thinking and acting in a willful, arbitrary manner. True development can take place only in the presence of both expansive liberty and a high degree of self-discipline. . . . Both in Plato's Academy and in the ancient Buddhist university at Nalanda there was freedom; but there was also stern confrontation with truth. Thus there was creative, original thinking. And it was precisely for this reason that the Academy and Nalanda were able to bequeath such rich spiritual heritages to their respective spheres of civilization.

Evidence of the fact that strict training is integral to any effort to expand spiritual freedom can also be seen in the less ancient examples of Oxford and Cambridge. In both universities, where many seminal scholars have been trained and much enduring research produced, an educational system is followed whose rigors reflect the universities' medieval roots. At the same time, students are afforded the

high degree of freedom required to grow spiritually and to prepare themselves to make their contributions to society.

“Soka Means Creating Value”—I wish to request that you always strive to be creative individuals. The name of this institution—Soka University—means a university for the creation of value. This in turns means that the basic aim of our university must be to create the kind of value society needs to become healthier and more wholesome. This is the kind of value that must be offered—or returned—to society. Consequently, all students here should cultivate their creative abilities in an effort to develop a rich vision for the future and contribute in a meaningful way to society.

An Unforgettable Teacher

From a series of essays by Daisaku Ikeda, first published in the Philippine magazine Mirror, 1998.

Makiguchi’s initial experience as a teacher was in a remote rural region [of Japan. The] manners [his students] brought from their impoverished homes were rough. But Makiguchi was insistent, “From the viewpoint of education, what difference could there be between them and other students? Even though they may be covered with dust or dirt, the brilliant light of life shines from their soiled clothes. Why does no one try to see this? The teacher is all that stands between them and the cruel discrimination of society.”

He wanted desperately to free children from the Japanese system of teaching by rote learning, which stifled children’s individuality. He believed that education should never be forced and saw it as the means to enlighten as many people as possible, providing them with the key to unlock the treasure-house of wisdom themselves.

From his own practical classroom experience, Makiguchi went on to develop his theory of “Value-Creating Education.” For him, the purpose of education was happiness, and the essence of happiness was what he called “value-creation”—“soka” in Japanese. He defined value on three levels: beauty, gain or benefit, and social good. As an educator, he saw his job as enabling young people to create this kind of value for themselves. Sometimes Makiguchi’s theory on education was criticized for being “too down-to-earth.” He retorted, “That’s only natural, because the teaching methods I embrace come from my own difficult struggles in the classroom. Mine is not the tenuous theory of a scholar stuck in an office.”

The Dawn of a Century of Humanistic Education

Published in Japanese in the Seikyo Shimbun, January 1, 2000.

To others my mentor and I must have presented a destitute sight. In truth, Mr. Toda could not pay my wages, and I could not afford a warm overcoat even though winter was quickly closing in. Had we spoken to others of starting a university, they would surely have ridiculed us and dismissed the idea out of

hand. But in our hearts, my mentor and I were kings. Mr. Toda declared, "Let's make it the best university in the world!" On that day, the flame of Soka University that burned fiercely in his heart was passed on to me.

The flame within Mr. Toda had been lit by his mentor, the Soka Gakkai's founder Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. Mr. Makiguchi once said to him, "In the future, we must found a school based on the value-creating (Soka) pedagogy that I have been formulating. If we can't do it during my lifetime, please do it in yours."

Setting Fresh Goals Toward Soka Gakkai's 80th Anniversary

Executive Leaders Conference, "Setting Fresh Goals towards the Soka Gakkai's 80th Anniversary (At an executive leaders conference commemorating May 3rd, Soka Gakkai Day, held in Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo, on May 10, 2006).

Rector Tretyakov also said that the most important thing in a university is not grand buildings but the kind of people who work there. If everyone who studies or works at a university, he continued, treats it as if it is their own home, the institution will survive even if everything around it is destroyed. He further said that what creates a university and its history, past and present, are people—the selflessly devoted faculty and staff and those working out of the limelight, who are committed to the university's ideals.

Neither buildings nor the organizational structure are what ultimately matter; everything comes down to people, to their spirit and attitude. This is a rule that applies not only to universities but to all groups and organizations.

Soka Education, *Middle Way Press, 2001*

[p.167] A university is not the result of a system or a building program but a product of the determination and passion of young people seeking new knowledge and wisdom. First of all, determined young people must aspire to make truth their own. To help fulfill such aspirations, teachers and instructors will be found; and through the cooperative effort of students and instructors, universities will evolve. Fundamentally, the university begins with a thirst for knowledge and a love of truth on the part of the students. The atmosphere of such thirst and love must prevail. A university without eager students is a university without life, a university in which the main purpose has been forgotten. The time has come to return to the true origins of university education. . . .

Here at Soka University, you must not wait passively for the university to do something for you but must join proudly, bravely, actively, passionately in making this university a new light of hope. Dialogue must continue, but it must be useful and profitable and based on responsibility and trust, not

irresponsible arguments. This is your university. You are responsible for it. Remember that we are all united in wanting to make Soka University a springboard for the advancement of human culture. If you remember these things, your dialogues will be fruitful. We must create at this university a magnificent community of human beings joined together in a common cause.

[p. 170] Today we need bright young people who have studied at private universities to acquire not only knowledge and wisdom but also freedom and independence of thought. When such young people travel about the world, working or relaxing with the masses of humanity, we will begin to have a new kind of cultural exchange and fusion among individuals and peoples. We will, in short, have cultural interchange at the grass-roots level, instead of only among diplomats and the elite. The day will come when cultural bridges will link the peoples of the earth, when friendships will stretch across all national barriers, when people's hearts will respond joyfully to the birth peal of a new global culture and a new civilization for all humankind. You must become the envoys and the builders of the bridges of culture and peace connecting the peoples of the world. You must toll the great bell announcing to future generations the birth of a new global culture. The reverberations of that bell will echo the yearnings of multitudes of people in all nations.

Commencement Speeches

SGI Graphic, *November 2000*

Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony at SUA on May 21, 2006.

. . . the world in which we live today, jarred as it is by inexorable, dramatic change, demands new expressions of creative wisdom. It eagerly awaits the appearance of individuals that are imbued with the vision and energy that can be trusted to build a grander, better world. And it is you, the students and graduates of SUA, who will meet these lofty expectations of our era by serving as the pioneers of a new frontier in this century. For you embrace a robust philosophy that reveres the inherent dignity of life. I ask you to inspire hope where there is suffering, progress where there is stagnation—and, in doing so, usher in a truly global renaissance by fulfilling the roles which you were meant to fulfill.

At the seventh Commencement Ceremony of Soka Senior High School on March 16, 1977.

Published in *Collected Works of Daisaku Ikeda*, Vol. 56, *Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbun*, pp. 187-188.

It's important for people to have a place to return to. Life is full of ups and downs. It's often thanks to certain troubles that one can once again appreciate and enjoy life. If we forget who we are, we need something to give us a sense of orientation and a clear view of which direction to continue in. If you

ever feel deadlocked, encourage yourself by remembering your university days, and then move forward with confidence.

Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship

Teacher's College, Columbia University New York City, 1996 - Addresses in the United States,
www.daisakuikedada.org

Education must be the propelling force for an eternally unfolding humanitarian quest. It is for this reason that I consider education the final and most crucially important undertaking of my life... . Education is a uniquely human privilege. It is the source of inspiration that enables us to become fully and truly human, to fulfill a constructive mission in life, with composure and confidence. This is also the reason I deeply concur with the view expressed by [Columbia Teachers' College] President Levine that while education is perhaps the slowest means to social change, it is the only means.

In the coming years, I would hope that there could be held a world summit, not of politicians, but of educators. This is because nothing is of greater importance to the human future than the transnational solidarity of educators.

The Triumph of Education is the Everlasting Triumph of Humanity

SJI President's Speeches: Bonus Articles, Honored by Southern Illinois University Carbondale, June 6, 2006, Publications CD, January 1, 2006, p. 8.

In this day and age, faculty members do not have the right to lord it over their students. Faculty and students are colleagues and partners in the shared pursuit of learning. Teachers should be willing to make sacrifices in order to foster their students into fine successors.

This is the heart of Soka education, and the spirit demonstrated by both Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda. I hope faculty members will take the time to reach out warmly to students on a personal level by inquiring about their physical and emotional well-being and offering heartfelt encouragement. Such small kindnesses and gestures of genuine concern can make a lasting impression on a student, creating fond memories that will endure for a lifetime.

Educators Without Arrogance

Faith into Action, *World Tribune Press*, 1999.

[p. 264] Shakyamuni waged a head-on struggle against dogmas that enchain and divide human beings. He strictly admonished, "The one who is full of rigid, fixed views, puffed up with pride and arrogance, who deems himself 'perfect,' becomes anointed in his own opinion because he holds firmly to his own

views.” Shakyamuni, who believed in continually seeking self-improvement, plunged into the realities of society as an “educator” in pursuit of a truly humane way of life, not as an absolute being who looked down on the people.

[p. 265] The French philosopher Charles Péguy asserted that a crisis in civilization and society is indicative of a crisis in education. Civilization is placed in jeopardy when humanity is jeopardized or crushed by political force or religious authority. Since teachers are the representatives of humanism, education provides the key to overcoming crises in this area. As a result, protecting education is protecting civilization; transforming education, meanwhile, serves to transform society. Indeed, the extent to which humanistic education flourishes is the barometer of civilization. . . .

The level of culture that teachers themselves have attained in the depths of their lives through their own personal efforts is conveyed from one human being to another, from teacher to pupil. Education is not something that is conferred in a highhanded manner from without. Consequently, teachers’ inner growth contributes to the pupils’ happiness and both educational and social advances.

[p. 266] The greatest enemy of learning is fear. This is true of language, of art, of every area of study. When we’re afraid of being laughed at, of embarrassment, of being looked down on by others for our mistakes, shortcomings or limitations progress becomes very difficult. We must be brave. So what if others laugh? Whoever makes fun of those trying their best are the ones who should be ashamed. . . .

Education must never be coercive. The heart of education exists in the process of teacher and pupil learning together, the teacher drawing forth the pupil’s potential and raising the pupil to eventually surpass the teacher in ability. . . . Mr. Makiguchi, our mentor, once said: “Teachers must not instruct students with the arrogant attitude of ‘Become like me!’ It is far more important for teachers to adopt the attitude: ‘Don’t satisfy yourself with trying to become like me. Make your model someone of higher caliber.’” True teachers [who are genuinely concerned for the development of each student], therefore, are those who have the humility to advance together with their students.

Developing Capable People

SGI Graphic, August 2007, p. 25. From “Thoughts on The New Human Revolution,” 32, Seikyo Shimbun, July 22, 1998.

The greatest treasure that we can leave for the future is capable people. And no one is more talented and able than a person who can discover and nurture individuals of promise and ability. In the process of fostering others, we polish and perfect ourselves.

Wisdom and Creativity

“Words of Wisdom by Buddhist Philosopher Daisaku Ikeda,” <http://www.ikedaquotes.org>

The more knowledge one gains, the more important becomes the question of what that knowledge will be used for. Knowledge without wisdom and philosophy produces nothing more than talented beasts.

Knowledge alone cannot give rise to value. It is only when knowledge is guided by wisdom that value is created. The font of wisdom is found in the following elements: an overarching sense of purpose, a powerful sense of responsibility and, finally, the compassionate desire to contribute to the welfare of humankind.

The times when I have most intensely felt and experienced the inner reality of creation have been those times when I have thrown myself wholeheartedly into a task, when I have carried through with that task to the very end. At such times, I experience a dramatically expanded sense of self. I can almost hear the joyous yell of victory issuing from the depths of my being.

This sense of fulfillment and joy is the crystallization of all the effort—each drop of sweat, each tear—expended to reach that moment. Life's inherent creativity, its dynamic vitality, is brought to the surface only through the strenuous exertions of a life of consistent action.

Life is Beautiful

SGI Graphic, September 2007, p. 20.

Facing the past squarely is different from what some scholars call a “masochistic” view of history. It is self-examination, without which there can be no bright future for us. Those who eliminate facts from history will themselves be left out by history. Learning from the past mistakes is a new beginning for a better tomorrow. A nation that does so will be respected by others, and its people will be able to have pride.

Discussions on Youth and Dialogue with Hope

SGI Graphic, February 2007, p. 36.

You can run away from your responsibilities, of course. That freedom exists. But it is a very small, petty freedom. It only leads to a life of great hardship, a life in which you are powerless, weak and completely frustrated.

Alongside this small freedom, however, exists a much greater freedom. The well-known Japanese novelist Eiji Yoshikawa (1892-1962) wrote, “Great character is forged through hardship.” Only by polishing yourself through repeated difficulties can you build a self that sparkles as brightly as a gem.

Once you have developed such a state of life, nothing will faze you. You will be free. You will be victorious. Once you realize this truth, even hardships become enjoyable. Daring to take on tough challenges—that in itself are immense freedom...

Life is a battle to attain ultimate and unlimited freedom. Faith in Buddhism allows us to use our karma and the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death as springboards to happiness. The purpose of faith is to forge that kind of self. Faith enables us to attain a state of unsurpassed freedom.

SGI Graphic, *August 2007*, p. 36.

You're absolutely free to choose your own path. It's your life. You yourself have to decide what's best for you ... the school you graduate from doesn't determine your entire life. Far more important is that you have the strength and depth of character to earnestly ponder the question of how you should live your life. How much inner strength and depth you possess will determine how fulfilled and satisfying your life will be. ...

It all comes down to this: those who achieve the goals they set for themselves are winners and lead happy lives. This is the key.

SGI Graphic, *September 2007*, p. 36.

If there is a university you want to get into, then study as much as it takes to get in. Success comes from effort. Study seriously every day. Playing and dreaming won't get you what you want. Pipe dreams like "Ah, wouldn't it be wonderful if I could learn English overnight," or "There must be some way to get smart while fooling around," will get you nowhere.

Nothing great is achieved without serious effort. There is no easy road to learning. Study so hard that you surprise everyone. This is the way you should be thinking. Such tremendous effort will become a wonderful, noble and deeply fulfilling memory of your youth. It will be your medal of honor to proudly commemorate those days...It is a huge mistake to compare academic study and faith on the same level. Thinking that you don't need to study hard because you chant is a sign of an erroneous attitude toward faith; it is the kind of misguided thinking we see in escapist religions. When it comes to study, it is the person who studies hardest who succeeds. This is as a matter of course. Faith, in contrast, is what forges our spirit so that we can undergo and endure that effort.

For instance, you can sit praying in front of a rice cooker forever, but unless you put rice in it, you can never expect to get any cooked rice. Similarly, you can have all the faith in the world, but if you don't study, you'll never get anywhere academically. It's like a motor that only idles but produces no forward motion.

The Heart is Most Important

World Tribune, *January 11, 2002*, p. 5. Also in *Living Buddhism*, Nov-Dec 2008, p. 5.

Words spoken from the heart have the power to change a person's life. They can even melt the

icy walls of mistrust that separate peoples and nations. We must expand our efforts to promote dialogue between and among civilizations. I am utterly convinced that we were not born into this world to hate and destroy each other. We must restore and renew our faith in humanity and in each other. We must never lose sight of the fact that we can still make the 21st century an era free from the flames of war and violence – an era in which all people may live in peace. To this end, we must strive to make a profound reverence for life the prevailing spirit of our times and our planet.

Build Peace in the Hearts of People

Daisaku Ikeda and Majid Tehranian, Global Civilization: A Buddhist-Islamic Dialogue (London and New York: British Academic Book, 2003), pp. 140-141.

It may seem circuitous, but the foundation for real, unshakable peace is to build peace in the hearts of people, each individual; in other worlds, to cultivate personal, inner peace in all of us.

What we in the SGI have been doing is trying to stimulate this kind of “human revolution” in people all over the world, trying to help them build their own inner peace. I will always have faith humanity can extricate itself from the conflicts and violence imposed by the vicissitudes of fate when the internal change in human lives, coming like wave upon wave on the shore, turns into a swelling tumult of people with the wisdom of inner peace.

Restoring Our Connections

SGI Quarterly, January 2008, p. 5.

The poetic spirit can be found in any human endeavor. It may be vibrantly active in the heart of a scientist engaged in research in the awed pursuit of truth. When the spirit of poetry lives within us, even objects do not appear as mere things; our eyes are trained on an inner spiritual reality. A flower is not just a flower. The moon is no mere clump of matter floating in the skies. Our gaze fixed on a flower or the moon, we intuitively perceive the unfathomable bonds that link us to the world. . . .

Now more than ever, we need the thunderous, rousing voice of poetry. We need the poet’s impassioned songs of peace, of the shared and mutually supportive existence of all things. We need to reawaken the poetic spirit within us, the youthful, vital energy and wisdom that enable us to live to the fullest. We must all be poets.

An ancient Japanese poet wrote, “Poems arise as ten thousand leaves of language from the seeds of people’s hearts. . . .” Our planet is scarred and damaged, its life-systems threatened with collapse. We must shade and protect Earth with “leaves of language” arising from the depths of life. Modern civilization will be healthy only when the poetic spirit regains its rightful place.

Guidance at Nagano Training Center, August 1991

Athenaeum, *Fall 1997, 1(1), p. 2.*

To become a top scholar in your specific field, expect 30 to 50 years to be necessary. It took me 40 years to reach where I am today! There's no need to be impatient. Your steady advancement will surely lead to this goal. Enjoy the state of life where you can create value every moment.

I want each of you to become a lighthouse in society and become respected and praised by others, so that people will be impressed by you, saying that a great scholar or person is a member of the SGI. At the same time, please be a source of pride for everyone in the organization. Please strive to create harmony and protect your organization. Instead of showing elitism, please be leaders of the common people, who can embrace members of all classes.

Please do not be swayed by theory. Life is short and time is limited. Instead of spending so much time trying to understand with your intellectual minds, I suggest that you actively struggle in the organization. Through such painstaking struggles for the sake of the members, you will be able to share the sufferings of others and, in the long run, you'll be happier that way-you'll be able to change your karma in less time.

Education alone cannot lead human beings to change their karma, nor can it transform their society. The ideal condition would be to conjoin Buddhism, which is the rhythm and energy of life, and education, which enables human beings to develop their intellect--let them co-exist.

Quotes on Education

"Words of Wisdom by Buddhist Philosopher Daisaku Ikeda" <http://www.ikedaquotes.org/>

- Universities exist to benefit those who are unable to attend them.
- There is no genuine education without earnest life-to-life interaction and inspiration. People grow through their interaction with people.
- Knowledge alone cannot give rise to value. It is only when knowledge is guided by wisdom that value is created. The font of wisdom is found in the following elements: an overarching sense of purpose, a powerful sense of responsibility and, finally, the compassionate desire to contribute to the welfare of humankind.
- Believing in people, believing in some rich unknown something and drawing it out-that is the vigorous spirit of education.
- Education must be based on the fundamental rhythm of life itself-the wish to grow, to extend oneself, to break out of one's shell. It must seek to place people on the track to self-improvement. It cannot be authoritarian; it must seek to enhance a person's progress with his agreement and to his satisfaction.

- Unlike political and economic concerns, educational programs do not bear fruit immediately; thus it is hard to convince people of their importance. But in the long term, education cannot be overlooked as a key to bringing stability and prosperity to society.
- The genuine goal of education must be the life-long happiness of those who learn. Education should never be subordinated to the demands of national ego, or of corporations searching for profit-generating employees. Human beings, human happiness, must always be the goal and objective.
- Knowledge itself is a neutral tool that can be used for good or evil. Wisdom, in contrast, always directs us toward happiness. The task of education must be to stimulate and unleash the wisdom that lies dormant in the lives of all young people. This is not a forced process, like pressing something into a preformed mold, but rather drawing out the potential which exists within.
- To me, the essence of education is this process whereby one person's character inspires another. Once children feel that their teachers are genuinely concerned for their individual welfare, they will begin to trust them and open up to them.
- Education should not be based on or limited by a nationalist agenda. Education must cultivate the wisdom to reject and resist violence in all its forms. It must foster people who intuitively understand and know-in their mind, in their heart, with their entire being-the irreplaceable value of human beings and the natural world. I believe such education embodies the timeless struggle of human civilization to create an unerring path to peace.
- Education must inspire the faith that each of us has both the power and the responsibility to effect positive change on a global scale.
- Nothing is more crucially important today than the kind of humanistic education that enables people to sense the reality of interconnectedness, to appreciate the infinite potential in each person's life, and to cultivate that dormant human potential to the fullest.
- Education makes us free. The world of knowledge and of the intellect is where all people can meet and converse. Education liberates people from prejudice. It frees the human heart from its violent passions
- It is through education that we are liberated from powerlessness, from the burden of mistrust directed against ourselves. To awaken the abilities that have been lying dormant within. To arouse and extend the soul's aspiration to become full and complete. Can there be any more sublime experience in life?
- The task of education must be fundamentally to ensure that knowledge serves to further the cause of human happiness and peace.

- The proud mission of those who have been able to receive education must be to serve, in seen and unseen ways, the lives of those who have not had this opportunity.
- Education is to ignite a flame. When teachers burn with a passion for truth, the desire to learn will be ignited in their students' hearts. When teachers are excited about culture and beauty, the creativity of their students will leap up like a bright flame.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE LEGAL DIVISION

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, *Volume V, page 174.*

“Lawyers exist to help those facing legal troubles. Yet often lawyers become haughty, thinking themselves better than others.”

“Politicians exist for the sake of citizens. They are public servants. Yet politicians tend to grow insolent, SUPPOSING themselves above their constituents, whom they exploit.”

“Ordinary People are the True Buddha,”

Race Discrimination in America Demonstrates the Limitations of Secular Law

“*Winds of Happiness,*” *The New Human Revolution, Volume 10, pages 83-86.*

“Now is the time for our fellow members in the United States to stand up. Why did this crisis occur? [Los Angeles riots on August 11-16, 1965]. It’s clearly because of the injustice of racial discrimination. The elimination of such discrimination is the earnest wish of African –Americans. And political leaders of good conscience have worked hard to see this realized. As a result, a law that protects the civil rights of African-Americans has finally been enacted.”

“But why is it that discrimination persists, even though equality is now guaranteed by law? The reason is because discrimination resides in people’s hearts. In order to become a nation of true freedom and democracy, the United States must move forward from reforming its laws to reforming the hearts of its people.”

Shin’ichi’s voice grew more forceful: “Only Buddhism can realize a reformation of people’s hearts, a reformation of their inner state of life.”

“August 15, Los Angeles time, the scheduled date of the outdoor culture festival there, marks the twentieth anniversary of the end of World War II. I want to make it the day when we lift high the banner of Buddhism, the philosophy of true happiness and peace for all people, over the land of America.”

Japan’s defeat in the war was tragic and painful, but thanks to the United States, in its wake freedom of religion was instituted in Japan and the dawn of kosen-rufu arrived. For that, I want to show my gratitude to the United States.”

In the ten years since the Montgomery Bus Boycott sparked by the arrest of Rosa Parks in 1955, the American Civil Rights Movement had grown tremendously and legislation was being passed toward the complete eradication of racial discrimination. In particular, the Civil Rights Act was a significant milestone. This law had been submitted to the U.S. Senate by President John F. Kennedy in June 1963

and enacted in July 1964, after his assassination and during the presidency of his successor Lyndon B. Johnson.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 clearly prohibited discrimination in public facilities, such as restaurants, theaters, parks, and swimming pools, as well as in the workplace. It did not, however, sufficiently abolish discrimination in the area of voting rights.

In 1866, three years after President Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves, the U.S. Congress passed the first Civil Rights Act, which guaranteed full civil rights to all Americans, regardless of race, color or previous condition of servitude. In 1870, the fifteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed, officially granting African-Americans the right to vote, but this stirred terrible anger and rebellion among the white community.

Lynchings of Black Americans were frequent, and those who tried to exercise their voting rights were often forcefully prevented from doing so by whites. Many white Americans feared and loathed the idea of giving the right to vote to Black Americans, whom they had dominated and scorned for so long. Some states thus restricted the voting rights of African-Americans by abusing the requirement that all eligible voters register with the local authorities.

In the southern state of Mississippi, for example, voter registration qualifications were made very strict, demanding that registrars provide tax payment certificates, read and explain passages from the Constitution and so forth. The rest of the southern states followed suit.

Some went so far as to require that voters possess a certain amount of land or property. Many African-Americans who had been forced to work as slaves and denied any education were illiterate, and very few of them owned land or anything else of value. It was in this way that southern states attempted to legally restrict the voting rights of black Americans.

President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965, just eight days before Shin'ichi and his party were due to arrive in the United States. This law banned any qualification or prerequisite to voting, such as presenting tax certificates or taking literacy tests, that denied the right of any American to vote on account race or color. It had been a long slow process but steady progress was being made in passing legislation that outlawed racial discrimination. Even so, in actuality this injustice did not abate.

The suffering of African-Americans continued in various forms, with persisting discrimination in employment and promotion practices, as well as in housing and education. Employment discrimination was especially harsh. Finding work itself was difficult and very few people were able to pursue the field of their choice.

Furthermore, black Americans were paid less than white Americans doing the same job, and if business went bad, they were the first fired and the last to be rehired. Like a virus penetrating the finest

filter, the prejudice residing in people's hearts slipped through the loopholes of the law and gave rise to the cruel act of racial discrimination,

Shin'ichi determined to spread the Buddhist philosophy of the equality of life throughout America in order to eradicate the discrimination inherent in people's lives. He and his traveling companions departed from Haneda Airport at ten o'clock in the evening on August 14[1965], according to the original plan. It was eighteen years to the day that Shin'ichi had encountered Josei Toda at his first Soka Gakkai discussion meeting. In other words, this date was a pivotal prime point of his life. He thus boarded the plane holding the spirit of his late mentor firmly in his heart.

Lawyers as Activists – Nelson Mandela's Struggle

David Krieger & Daisaku Ikeda (Translated by Richard L. Gage). Choose Hope: Your Role in Waging Peace in the Nuclear Age (Santa Monica, CA: Middleway Press, a Division of SGI-USA, 2001), pages 5-6.

Krieger: Th[e] power is within us. All it takes is one person to choose hope, to choose to make a difference, and the world will change.

Ikeda: Pioneers of new epochs have always stood independently for their ideals and faith. For instance, the struggles of a hero like Nelson Mandela brought down the infamous apartheid system in South Africa. While the ten thousand days he spent in prison might have obliterated courage and hope in ordinary people, Mandela never retreated a step. When the outside world learned of his staunch battle, people began supporting him and distancing themselves from the unjust South African regime. Then, as I still vividly remember, hope dawned.

In October 1990, six months after his release, Mandela visited Japan as deputy president of the African National Congress. Even then, at our first meeting, I sensed the indomitable will behind his gentle expression and could see he was compelled not by hatred of white people, as his critics suggested, but by compassionate love for all humanity.

Krieger: Though Mandela, during his years in prison, had every reason to despair, his story is filled with hope. He sought to overthrow a powerful, entrenched, racist regime in a country where whites had dominated blacks for centuries. Throughout his twenty-seven of imprisonment, he persevered and retained the conviction that human dignity must triumph over racism. And, in the end, he succeeded. His seemingly impossible dream became a reality. After release from prison, he became the first black man to be elected president of South Africa.

Ikeda: His aim was not to replace whites with blacks, as some said, but to build a society where all could live in equality. As he said after his release: "It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to

achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”¹

Krieger: Such accomplishments are not possible without strong conviction. The greatest aspect of Nelson Mandela’s story was his spirit of forgiveness after assuming power. After his long, hard struggle, he was neither bitter nor vindictive. He demonstrated his true stature as a human being by seeking to uphold human dignity for all, even the oppressors.

Dialogue: A True Alternative to Litigation to Resolve Disputes

My Dear Friends In America, “*Mahayana Buddhism and Twenty-first Century Civilization*,” *World Tribune Press, 2001, pp. 332-344. Speech Delivered at Harvard University, September 24, 1993.*

Since its inception, the philosophy of Buddhism has been associated with peace and pacifism. That emphasis derives principally from the consistent rejection of violence combined with stress on dialogue and discussion as the best means of resolving conflict. The description of the life of Shakyamuni provides a good illustration. His life was completely untrammelled by dogma, and his interactions with his fellows stressed the importance of dialogue. The sutra recounting the travels that culminated his Buddhist practice begins with an episode in which the aged Shakyamuni uses the power of language to avert an invasion.

According to the sutra, Shakyamuni, then eighty years old, did not directly admonish the minister of Maghada, a large country bent on realizing its aims of hegemony through the conquest of the neighboring state of Vajji. Instead, he spoke persuasively about the principles by which nations prosper and decline. His discourse dissuaded the minister from implementing the planned attack. The final chapter of this same sutra concludes with a moving description of Shakyamuni on his deathbed. As he lay dying, he repeatedly urged his disciples to raise any uncertainties that they might have about the Buddhist Law (Dharma) or its practice, so that they would not find themselves regretting unasked questions after his passing. Up until his last moment, Shakyamuni actively sought out dialogue, and the drama of his final voyage from beginning to end is illuminated by the light of language, skillfully wielded by one who was truly a "master of words."

Why was Shakyamuni able to employ language with such freedom and to such effect? What made him such a peerless master of dialogue? I believe that his fluency was due to the expansiveness of his enlightened state, utterly free of all dogma, prejudice and attachment. The following quote is illustrative: "I perceived a single, invisible arrow piercing the hearts of the people." The "arrow" symbolizes a prejudicial mindset, an unreasoning emphasis on individual differences. India at that time

¹ Sheridan Johns, ed. “Speech on Release from Prison,” *Mandela, Tambo, and the African National Congress: The Struggle Against Apartheid, 1948-1990: A Documentary Survey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 228. (Cape Town, February 11, 1990: Upon his release from prison, Mandela quoted from his own 1964 speech following his trial.)

was going through transition and upheaval, and the horrors of conflict and war were an ever-present reality. To Shakyamuni's penetrating gaze, it was clear that the underlying cause of this conflict was attachment to distinctions, to ethnic, national, and other differences.

In the early years of this century, Josiah Royce (one of many important philosophers Harvard has given the world) declared that:

"Reform, in such matters, must come, if at all, from within ... The public as a whole is whatever the processes that occur, for good or evil, in individual minds, may determine."

As Royce points out, the "invisible arrow" of evil is not to be found in the existence of races and classes external to ourselves, but is embedded in our own hearts. The conquest of our own prejudicial thinking, our own attachment to difference, is the guiding principle for open dialogue. Such discussion, in turn, is essential for the establishment of peace and universal respect for human rights. It was his own complete absence of prejudice that enabled Shakyamuni to expound the Law with such freedom, adapting his style of teaching to the character and capacity of the person whom he was speaking.

Whether he was mediating a communal dispute over water-rights, converting a violent criminal, or admonishing one who objected to the practice of begging, Shakyamuni attempted first to make others aware of the "arrow" of their inner evil. The power of his extraordinary character brought these words to the lips of one contemporaneous sovereign: "Those whom we, with weapons, cannot force to surrender, you subdue unarmed."

Only by overcoming attachment to difference can a religion rise above an essentially tribal outlook to offer a global faith. Nichiren, for example, dismissed the [Japanese] shogunal authorities, who were persecuting him as the "rulers of this little island country." His vision was broader, directed toward establishing a religious spirit that would embody universal values and transcend the confines of a single state.

Dialogue is not limited to formal debate or placid exchanges that wafts like a spring breeze. There are times when, to break the grip arrogance, speech must be like the breath of fire. Thus, although we typically associate Shakyamuni and Nagarjuna only with mildness, it was the occasional ferocity of their speech that earned them the sobriquet of "those who deny everything," in their respective eras.

Similarly, Nichiren, who demonstrated a familial affection and tender concern for the common people, was uncompromising in his confrontations with corrupt and degenerate authority. Always unarmed in the chronically violent Japan of his time, he relied exclusively and unflinchingly on the power of persuasion and nonviolence. He was tempted with the promise of absolute power if he renounced his faith, and threatened with the beheading of his parents if he adhered to his beliefs. Nevertheless, he maintained the courage of his convictions. The following passage, written upon his exile to a distant

island from which none was expected to return, typifies his lionlike tone: "Whatever obstacles I might encounter, so long as men of wisdom do not prove my teachings to be false, I will never yield!"

Nichiren's faith in the power of language was absolute. If more people were to resolve to pursue dialogue in this same unrelenting manner, the inevitable contentions of human life would surely find more harmonious resolution. Prejudice would yield to empathy, war would give way to peace. Genuine dialogue results in the transformation of opposing viewpoints, changing them from wedges that drive people apart into bridges that link them together.

Dependent Origination: The Basis for an Empathetic System for Resolving Disputes

My Dear Friends In America, *"The Age of Soft Power," World Tribune Press, pp.122-132. A speech delivered at Harvard University, Cambridge, September 26, 1991.*

In the past, the driving force of history all too often depended on "hard power" of military might, political authority, and wealth. In recent years however, the relative importance of hard power has diminished, slowly giving way to knowledge and information, culture, ideas, and systems – the weapons of soft power.

I propose that self-motivation is what will open the way to the era of soft power. While systems depending on hard power have succeeded by using established tools of coercion to move people toward certain goals, the success of soft power is based on volition. It is an internally generated energy of will through consensus and understanding among people. The processes of soft power unleash the inner energies of the individual. Rooted in the spirituality and religious nature of human beings, this kind of energy has traditionally been considered in philosophical themes. But without the support of a philosophical foundation to strengthen and mobilize the spiritual resources of the individual, the use of soft power would become nothing more than "fascism with a smile." In such a society information and knowledge would be abundant, but subject to manipulation by those in power. A citizenry without wisdom would fall easy prey to authority with self-serving goals. For these reasons, the burden of sustaining and accelerating the trend toward soft power lies with philosophy.

One of the most important Buddhist concepts, dependent origination, holds that all beings and phenomena exist or occur in relation to other beings or phenomena. All things are linked in an intricate web of causation and connection, and nothing, whether in the realm of human affairs or natural phenomena, can exist or occur solely of its own accord. Greater emphasis is placed on the interdependent relationships between individuals than on the individual alone. However, as astute Western observers like Henri Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead have noted, on interdependence can submerge the individual and reduce one's capacity for positive engagement in the world. Passivity, in fact, has been a pronounced

historical tendency in Buddhist-influenced cultures. The deeper essence of Buddhism, however, goes beyond passivity to offer a level of interrelatedness that is uniquely dynamic, holistic, and generated from within.

We have noted that encounters between different cultures are not always amicable. The reality of opposing interests and even hostility must be acknowledged. What can be done to promote harmonious relationships? An episode from the life of Shakyamuni may help. Shakyamuni was once asked the following question: “We are told that life is precious. And yet all people live by killing and eating other living beings. Which living beings may we kill and which living beings must we not kill?” To this simple expression of doubt, Shakyamuni replied, “It is enough to kill the will to kill.”

Shakyamuni’s response was neither evasion nor deception, but is based on the concept of dependent origination. He is saying that, in seeking the kind of harmonious relationship expressed by respect for the sanctity of life, we must not limit ourselves to the phenomenal level where hostility and conflict (in this case, which is the living beings it is acceptable to kill and which is not) undeniably exist. We must seek harmony on a deeper level – a level where it is truly possible to “kill the will to kill.” More than objective awareness, we must achieve a state of compassion transcending distinctions between self and other. We need to feel the compassionate energy that beats within the depths of all peoples’ subjective lives where the individual and the universal are merged. This is not the simplistic denial or abnegation of the individual self that Bergson and Whitehead criticize. It is the fusion of self with other. At the same time it is an expansion of the limited, ego-shackled self toward a greater self whose scale is an limitless an unbounded as the universe.

The teachings of Nichiren Buddhism include the passage: “Without life, environment cannot exist...” In other words, Buddhism regards life and its environment as two integral aspects of the same entity. The subjective world of the self and the objective world of its environment are not in opposition nor are they a duality. Instead, their relationship is characterized by inseparability and indivisibility. Neither is this unity a static one in which the two realms merge as they become objectified. The environment, which embraces all universal phenomena, cannot exist except in a dynamic relationship with the internally-generated activity of life itself. In practical terms, the most important question for us as individuals is how to activate the inner sources of energy and wisdom existing within our lives.

Our society today urgently needs the kind of inwardly directed spirituality to strengthen self-control and restraint. It is a quality that deepens our respect for the dignity of life. In a world where interpersonal relationships are becoming increasingly tenuous, greater self-control and discipline would also help restore and rejuvenate endangered feelings, including friendship, trust and love, for without them there can be no rewarding and meaningful bonds between people.

Cicero, a Lawyer Using Words to Fight Injustice

“Spirit of Sharing Buddhism,” The Nationwide Executive Conference, Aug. 4, 2003, World Tribune 10/24/2003 p.2

The words of the wise cast an eternal illumination. For example, this saying attributed to Cicero has been a precious source of inspiration for me since my youth: “A room without books is like a body without a soul.”

Cicero, who was hailed as the “father of his country,” was also a brilliant statesman, lawyer and orator, renowned for his eloquent speech (see “Cicero: Committed to Justice,” p. 3). During an age of turmoil, Cicero used speech and philosophy to fight corrupt and evil authorities and to assist the persecuted and oppressed. Many of his superb speeches have been handed down to us today.

Cicero was also a prolific author, writing with great power on many subjects. Among his surviving works are *On the Republic*, *On Duties* and *On Ends*. His essays were regarded as a model of perfection in Europe and had a profound influence on the development of European culture.

Even the briefest remark can be an immense source of encouragement.

Offering words of hope in an age of turmoil is also the Soka Gakkai tradition. I ask that all of you strive to become brilliant and inspiring orators, the kind of speakers about whom others say enthusiastically, “I really look forward to hearing her speak again” or “He really made that discussion meeting unforgettable!”

What matters is not superficial appearances but sincerity and personal courage. Even the briefest remark—a “thank you” or an inquiry about someone’s family—can be an immense source of encouragement and have a tremendous ripple effect.

Please be champions of speech renowned for your deeply moving personal warmth. Your powerful conviction can jolt others to question misguided views and achieve a new level of awareness. Your persuasive logic can clarify the truth and refute injustice. Society is rife with envy and ego and intrigue. Before setting sail into a society as perilous as a stormy sea, young people must put forth genuine effort toward a lofty goal.

Cicero proclaimed that youth “ought to set their sights on great things and strive for them with unswerving devotion.” I remember that my mentor, the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, would often say, “Young people should cherish dreams that seem almost too big to accomplish.” As a young man, Cicero witnessed a fellow citizen plunged into the most abject circumstances after being falsely and maliciously accused of wrongdoing. This incident spurred Cicero to hone his ability to speak out for truth and justice.

Later, Cicero pleaded the case of another unjustly accused citizen, publicly attacking the dictatorial authorities as he did so. Cicero had acquired the confidence that, with words as his weapon, he could triumph over the forces of evil and corruption. He lamented, “Now it is a sort of blot and blemish of this age to be envious of virtue, to seek to crush merit in its very bloom.” Those who ascend to the summit of a towering peak are buffeted by fierce winds. Persecution assails greatness.

Nevertheless, malicious attacks must not go unchallenged. “The purpose of [our setting forth our case],” said Cicero, “was not that we might by what was said prove to you what was so obvious, but that we might overcome the hostility of all those who are malevolent, unjust, and envious.”

Throughout his life, Cicero was committed to achieving justice through his oratory. He declared: “Let me...denounce the insolence of the villains.” “Justice must be cultivated and maintained by every method.” “The man who does not defend someone, or obstruct the injustice when he can, is at fault just as if he had abandoned his parents or his friends or his country.”

Cicero stressed the necessity of speaking out resolutely against evil and corruption. Those who don't defend the truth or resist what is wrong end up allowing others to suffer. Although they may give the impression of being nice, affable people, they are in fact very foolish. It is crucial that we speak out against each injustice and correct each falsehood.

Tenacity and perseverance are the keys to winning.

Many were envious of Cicero's fame and upstanding reputation, but he also had true friends. Cicero, who often spoke about friendship, said: “Seeing that friendship includes very many and very great advantages, it undoubtedly excels all other things in this respect, that it projects the bright ray of hope into the future, and does not suffer the spirit to grow faint or to fall.” “The real friend...is, as it were, another self.”

Friends in whom we can trust, who share our ideals and goals, are a source of strength and hope, and they enrich our lives. One of Cicero's most famous orations, a mighty lion's roar of truth, was his defense of his mentor, the poet Aulus Licinius Archias. This man, under whom Cicero had studied literature as a youth, had been falsely accused of a crime and was in danger of being banished from Rome. The charges against him were nothing but an insidious plot concocted by the authorities.

When Cicero rose up to defend his teacher in court, he boldly declared: “If there be any natural ability in me, O judges,...this Aulus Licinius is entitled to be among the first to claim the benefit from me as his peculiar right.... Undoubtedly we ought, as far as lies in our power, to help and save the very man from whom we have received that gift.”

In his speech Cicero referred to his mentor as “a most sublime poet,” and largely due to Cicero's defense, the name of Aulus Licinius Archias has been recorded for all posterity. I have visited the ruins of

ancient Rome [in October 1961] and seen the Roman Forum where Cicero spoke. I composed the following poem at that time:

Standing here
Amid the ruins of ancient Rome,
I think:
The kingdom of the Mystic Law
Will never perish.

When a nation or organization is defeated and declines, the reasons are always complex; however, leaders are a major factor. Some leaders bring about failure: leaders who don't know the first thing about hard work, can't appreciate others' feelings, always take the easiest course, have a high opinion of themselves but achieve nothing of substance, don't support those making tremendous contributions, are ignorant of people's personal circumstances and give responsible positions to unreliable individuals. President Toda dealt with such leaders in the sternest fashion.

Let us reach out to many new friends and together walk toward happiness.

Cicero called out to the leaders of Rome, “[No power can] be found which will be able to undermine and destroy your union with the Roman knights, and such unanimity as exists among all good men.”

Cicero's name stands as one of the towering summits of history. Let us also create a proud achievement that will shine forever in the eternal history of kosen-rufu. The objective of many enterprises is to increase their wealth. The goal of nations is to prosper and develop.

What then is the Soka Gakkai's purpose? Kosen-rufu and world peace! It is increasing the number of Bodhisattvas of the Earth. This is the task Nichiren Daishonin has entrusted to us, which is why those who work for kosen-rufu are noble beyond measure. The foundation of working for kosen-rufu is the spirit of sharing Buddhism with others—the desire to help another friend, to create one more ally. This spirit is the most important thing of all and results in infinite benefit. It is also the underlying strength of the Soka Gakkai.

The world is waiting for humanism. Increasing our friends is a source of immense joy. Let us reach out to many new friends and together walk the great path toward happiness. Let us wisely and joyously strengthen our wonderful alliance of Soka as we chant in earnest and warmly encourage and support each other.

Hold High the Banner of Humanism

From the Third SGI World Lawyer's Conference, *The Truth Seekers, A Newsletter for the Legal Division of the SGI-USA Culture Department, Vol. One, Number Three (Spring/Summer 1998) p. 2.*

The purpose of law is to realize justice in society. It is the great mission of those who are engaged in the legal profession to see to it that law be correctly administered in modern society, which is complicated by conflicting interests and prejudices.

The case of Sacco and Vanzetti is a well-known miscarriage of justice. Sacco and Vanzetti were social activists who were regarded as ideologically dangerous individuals in America right after World War I. In a tragic course of events, they were adjudged guilty and executed for a crime that they did not commit, only to be officially proclaimed innocent fifty years later. Many conscientious individuals from around the world, such as Romain Rolland and Albert Einstein, wrote letters protesting the trial and appealing for clemency, and the protest movement spread like a prairie fire.

From his prison cell Sacco made the following ardent appeal to his son, Dante: " ... don't you use all for yourself only, but down yourself just one step, at your side and help the weak ones that cry for help, help the prosecuted and the victim, because they are your better friends;..." (The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti, Constable & Company Ltd., London, p.72).

These are the heart-rending words that came from a person accused of a crime without warrant. To call out to the end for justice as a friend and ally of the weak is the very image of a lawyer in whom the people can place unremitting trust.

Nichiren Daishonin wrote, "I was born in a remote land far from India, a person of low station and a priest of humble learning" (MW-2,111), revealing how he shared the sufferings of, and fought on for the sake of, all people.

I hope that as honorable disciples of the Daishonin, all of you ~ with vitality and compassion welling forth in your lives due to faith in the Mystic Law - will continue to hold high the banner of humanism in society.

One person who stakes his life on the struggle will be able to protect the castle of kosen-rufu and his fellow members. I hope that each of you will be able to prove the righteousness of Buddhism in society.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE HEALING ARTS DIVISION

Humanism and the Art of Medicine

Excerpts from A discussion between SGI President Ikeda, Soka Gakkai Nurses' Group Leaders Reiko Inamitsu, Kazuko Matsumoto and Secretary Akiko Kojima from the book: Humanism and the Art of Medicine, (p.198 – 208)

Nursing

President Ikeda: When we fall ill and go to the hospital, it is invariably the nurses who give us the greatest care and comfort. The presence of a sympathetic nurse can give untold hope and reassurance to a patient. Florence Nightingale said, "Nursing is an art." It is the art of health. She said that a painter works with a canvas, and a sculptor, with marble, but a nurse works with the most precious vessel of all, the living body, thus making nursing the finest of fine arts. She was indeed proud of her vocation. I agree that nursing is an art. A nurse is a healing artist who combines medical expertise, wisdom and character to work wonders. Nothing could be more admirable. I believe we must value nurses and the nursing profession more than we do today. As nurses your selves, what do you feel to be especially important when it comes to nursing?

Matsumoto: First, I think, one must listen carefully to what patients have to say. Having someone listening while they explain their feelings gives patients a chance to get their own thoughts organized; it also makes it easier to clarify and specific worries or problems they may be experiencing.

President Ikeda: People who are sick always have to deal with inner turmoil of some kind. They carry on a painful inner dialogue with themselves about their illness, posing questions that they then try to answer. Just by listening to a sick person articulate this inner conflict and pain; we can relieve some of his or her suffering. This is in accord with the Buddhist teaching of relieving suffering and imparting peace of mind. And we are not talking about pretending to listen, either. No, we must listen carefully and closely, with true concern. That personal warmth can actually help a person recover from illness.

Matsumoto: After every medical step has been taken, it is the patient's life force that makes them work. And, the support of nursing staff and family members is invaluable in strengthening the patient's life force.

President Ikeda: Strengthening the patient's life force is the essence of nursing, isn't it? Florence Nightingale also felt that minimizing the expenditure or depletion of the patient's 'vital energy' is of crucial importance in nursing. It is essential to create an environment most conducive to the recovery of each patient, she said, with the thought being given to letting in a proper amount of fresh air, making sure the patient gets sufficient sunlight as well as peace and quiet, and maintaining a well-balanced diet and cleanliness. I feel that Florence Nightingale firmly believed that the key to recovery from illness lies in the patient's life force, or 'vital power', as she called it. The task of nursing is to ensure that the patient's

life force is not weakened and doing whatever possible to strengthen it. The fundamental basis for nursing, therefore, is a deep reverence for life.

Inamitsu: The little things are so important, aren't they? Florence Nightingale said, "Nursing is in general made up of little things; little things they are called, but they culminate in matters of life and death."

President Ikeda: Those are very wise words. They are very similar to the attitude that a Buddhist leader must cultivate.

Inamitsu: The first Chinese character in the Japanese word for nursing (kango) combines the ideographs for 'hand' and 'eye'. In nursing, you have to both observe the patients with your eyes and to care for them with your hands.

President Ikeda: There was once an ascetic monk who had fallen ill and lived all alone. When Shakyamuni saw how sick he was, he inquired, "Why are you suffering all alone?"

The monk replied, "Being indolent by nature, I have never been able to endure caring for others when they were ill. Consequently, now that I am ill, no one will take care of me."

"I will care for you," Shakyamuni said, and he began gently rubbing the sick monk's body. He continued in this way for some time, and the monk's suffering gradually lessened. Then Sakyamuni changed the sick man's bedding, bathed him and dressed him in a fresh robe. And finally, when he encouraged the monk to persevere with his practice, the monk's body and mind were filled with joy.

Shakyamuni's hands stroking the body of the sick monk – that, surely, is the healing touch, the symbol of compassion. This story presents the quintessence of nursing, don't you think?

Matsumoto: Yes, I do. All of the important elements of nursing – touch, changing bedding, bathing, changing clothes, and offering encouragement – are included in the story.

Inamitsu: There is a profound relationship between Buddhism and nursing, isn't there?

President Ikeda: They are one and the same. Sakyamuni said, "If you would like to make an offering to me, make the offering to the sick instead." And he also said, "You must make offerings to all sick people with the same reverence that you would make offerings to the Buddha. Nursing the sick is the greatest of all good deeds."

Caring for and encouraging the sick are true Buddhist practice and the offering that please the Buddha more than any other.

President Ikeda: One problem is that the old image of doctors being superior to nurses has got to go. Rather, aren't doctors and nurses equal partners striving together towards a shared goal?

Inamitsu: In one respect, I think you can say that doctors provide the cure and nurses provide the care.

President Ikeda: Nursing is truly a noble profession. We must all recognize the true worth of nurses and their profession. I am sure nursing is very hard work. But nothing is so wonderful as to be able to care for and to ease the suffering of others. In Buddhism, one who does this is called bodhisattvas. Florence Nightingale declared that it is a privilege to suffer for humanity – “a privilege not reserved to the Redeemer and martyrs alone, but one enjoyed by numbers in every age.” Nurses are in a position to enjoy this special privilege of saving others.

Matsumoto: Regarding nursing as a special privilege reflects a very spiritual state, I think. Why, it makes all one’s complaints just fade away!

President Ikeda: Florence Nightingale also said that the kind of person one is mattered more in nursing than in any other profession. The nursing and the teaching professions rely almost entirely on the quality of the people in them.

Inamitsu: It makes one humble. As members of the SGI and practitioners of Nicherin Daishonin’s Buddhism, I think we are very fortunate to be able to develop ourselves through faith and practice.

Florence Nightingale--In Tribute to the Century of Women

“Persevering with Patience and Determination,” Living Buddhism, 07/01/2002 p.34)

What was the first obstacle she faced? Arrogant military doctors and officers who were openly prejudiced against nurses and viewed them with contempt. They had opposed the dispatch of the nursing team, declaring that the women were interfering in men’s work and would be of use. To them, the nurses were nothing but a nuisance. The treatment of the nurses was abominable. For their quarters, the thirty-eight nurses were assigned a kitchen and five small rooms, one of which was a closet, which Nightingale ultimately made her quarters. The doctors patently ignored them. For days Nightingale and her nurses weren’t even allowed to enter the wards because the doctors hadn’t granted permission. “Why on earth had they come?” they asked themselves. But Nightingale was patient. She had a mission to accomplish.

“The consideration of overwhelming importance,” she wrote, “was the opportunity offered to advance the cause of nursing... . If the nurses acquitted themselves creditably, never again would they be despised!” This was the determination that kept her going. Nightingale decided not to cause unnecessary friction but to try to win the trust of the doctors and officers. She and the nurses made pillows and bandages. They prepared meals. They actively sought out things that needed doing and set themselves diligently to them. The war took a turn for the worse, and wounded soldiers came flooding into the hospital. Some of them were Russians. The hospital was stretched beyond its capacities. Finally, the doctors approached Nightingale and asked for her assistance. She threw herself heart and soul into the task of nursing, working with utter devotion from early in the morning to far into the night, often without

resting. She never left the hospital for even a moment. She also assisted at major surgeries, and often remained on her feet for twenty hours and longer dressing wounds and sores. The more serious a patient's condition, the more diligently she cared for him. She did everything in her power to lessen her patients' suffering. She was always there at the bedside of the dying. One of the doctors wrote, with astonishment and praise, "I believe that there was never a severe case of any kind that escaped her notice, and sometimes it was wonderful to see her at the bedside of a patient who had been admitted perhaps an hour before, and of whose arrival one would hardly have supposed she could be already cognizant." She was determined that no patient who came into her sight, regardless of who they were, would feel deserted or alone. As she made her rounds of the wards, she would speak kindly to the men, smile and lay a gentle hand on them, encouraging each one. What a tremendous source of comfort this must have been for the soldiers! Whenever there was a crisis, Nightingale was there—so much so that the soldiers began to say that there must be more than one of her.

"The Angel of the Crimea"

Nightingale was always cheerful in front of the patients, no matter how busy she was or how trying her situation. She was always filled with energy. She didn't lose her sense of humor. She emanated an aura of caring and compassion. Her lively demeanor and cheerful voice was a fountain of hope to the dispirited patients. Before Nightingale arrived at the hospital, there had been an unceasing stream of complaints, curses and unpleasantness. Gradually, a new mood of peacefulness and purity filled the wards. Under Nightingale's influence, soldiers promised to give up drinking and to send money back to their families. When one woman stands up for a cause, what a momentous impact she can have on those around her!

Thoughts on The New Human Revolution: Florence Nightingale

President Ikeda's speech to Nurses Group, Living Buddhism, 10-1-2002 p.30 and 6-1-2002 page 26.

A person with a sense of mission and appreciation can resolutely overcome all storms of karma, crowned with the laurels of imperishable good fortune and benefit. Such a person will truly be a champion of happiness throughout eternity. Nightingale gave her life to nursing. It was a life that demonstrated to future generations the incredible strength and capacity of people fully awakened to their life's mission as they fight their way valiantly through the crushing breakers of adversity to reach their goal. Let us live that kind of life, too. Say to the world: "Watch and see what I will achieve in 10 years, in 50!" "Look at this life dedicated to kosen-rufu!" It is a huge challenge to keep one's sense of mission burning brightly to the very end. How can we do this? Through unity, through solidarity with others who share our mission. It is all very well to get by on our own when everything is going our way. But life is full of setbacks and unexpected difficulties. At such times, we shouldn't shut ourselves off from others.

We should strive to encourage and support each other. “Let’s challenge this together!” “Didn’t we promise to win together?” “Let’s have no regrets in life!” Mutual encouragement and support can be a source of great strength. In addition, many people become lazy and complacent when they are spoiled and pampered and lack proper direction or challenges to help them grow. Those who lead such self-centered, self-indulgent lives are bound to veer from the path of happiness and end in powerless self-defeat. Nightingale wisely realized this fact of human nature. Nichiren Daishonin writes: “A person of considerable strength, when alone, may fall down on an uneven path.... Therefore, the best way to attain Buddhahood is to encounter a good friend” (“Three Tripitaka Masters Pray for Rain,” WND, p. 598).

Herein also lies the significance of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda founding the Soka Gakkai in order to launch their struggle for kosen-rufu. Mr. Toda even boldly proclaimed, “The Soka Gakkai organization is more precious than my own life.” An American scholar who is an SGI-USA leader once asked me: “How can we advance on the right path and fulfill our mission without any wasted effort?” I replied that one crucial point is never to detach ourselves from the SGI—the organization of faith and kosen-rufu that upholds the Mystic Law of cause and effect. No matter what happens, it is important that we live and strive together with the SGI and our fellow SGI members throughout our lives. How crucial and heartening the presence of our organization is. The SGI provides us with encouragement, training, and opportunities for self improvement.

Banner of Humanism—Humanity Compassion, and Tolerance

Speech To Doctors Division Members (The dialogue serialized in The Journal of Oriental Studies. 1-1-2005) (SGI-USA pubs CD 1997-2006).

The struggle between good and evil, hope and despair continues unceasingly. Defeat in that struggle results in decline. Dr. Rene Dubos whom I met at the Seikyo Shimbun building wrote: “The earth is not a resting place. Man has elected to fight, not necessarily for him self, but for a process of emotional, intellectual, and ethical growth that goes on forever. To grow in the midst of dangers is the fate of the human race, because it is the law of the spirit.” A complete lack of exertion or stress may seem desirable, but in fact it results in boredom and stagnation. It is essential that we keep making continuous efforts amid challenging circumstances, pushing forward with dynamic creativity, and breaking through all obstacles. That is the way to develop new strength and achieve fresh growth, whether it be in the case of an individual or an organization. This is what enables us to advance along a path to fulfillment, victory, and happiness.

A Source of Light for the Medicine of the Future

Message to the Japan Doctors' Conference, October 1, 1986

I always feel the utmost respect of the doctors' division throughout the world, who, in their wide range of fields of specialization, are continually striving to realize a medical science devoted to philanthropy and to compassion. Undeniably, contemporary medicine, based on modern Western science, has taken long strides forward and has made great contributions to the happiness and prosperity of humanity.

But it is an equally undeniable fact that progress in medical science has generated many profound problems. I believe that two factors characterize these problems, which deeply influence not only humanity, but also all other living creatures on the planet.

First is a loss of concern with human beings themselves on the part of medicine. As many discerning people point out, in many instances, doctors concern themselves with illness but not with the people suffering from them.

The outstanding journalist Norman Cousins, who, in spite of collagen disease and a severe cardiac condition, had the strength of will and faith to return miraculously from the brink of death, has said, "The war against microbes has been largely won, but the struggle for equanimity is being lost." He has also made the following concrete and highly pertinent comments about contemporary medical education.: "One of the biggest needs in medical education today is to attract students who are well-rounded human beings: who will be interested in people and not just in the diseases that affect them; who can comprehend the reality of suffering and not just the symptoms; whose prescription pad will not exclude the human touch..."

Although clearly remarkable achievements have been made in physical diagnosis and therapy, in many instances physicians are less earnestly concerned with the suffering human beings as living entities, with the problems in the depths of their lives and their way of living, and with problems related to their families and the societies surrounding them. I believe that this failing is closely linked with the increase in the number of people afflicted with degenerative and stress-related diseases and with psychological problems.

The second characteristic factor pertains to the ethics of medical practices and procedures that concern life and death. Since these questions have been raised precisely because of advances in medical science, they are especially relevant to our times. Those concerning life include artificial insemination, extra uterine insemination, abortion, prebirth determination of the sex of the fetus, prenatal diagnosis, and genetic therapy and engineering. Those related to death include deciding whether to announce to patients they have possibly fatal illnesses like cancer (different cultures have different attitudes towards this question), determining death on the basis of the functioning brain, artificial techniques for the

prolongation of life, caring for people in a coma state, interpreting the experiences of people who have approached death and returned, and knowing how to assist the terminally ill.

Of course it is impossible to discuss all of these complicated matters together and at once. However, at the heart of all of these issues, far from there being a willingness to look the truth in the face and accept the fact that all living things must die, there appears to be an attitude, typically human and pathologic in nature, that, like many other things, life and death ought to be subject to our will and desire.

Shocking reports are heard in the United States and in Japan of black-market sales – at exorbitantly high prices – of human kidneys for transplantation. Such peddling of organs that are vital to life represents an inhuman aspect of contemporary civilization and can only be seen as a peculiar alliance between natural science and a commercialism eager to make a profit, even out of death.

Neither questions pertaining to life nor those relating to death may be solved by medical science alone. For instance, a mistake in orientation could destroy the relationship of trust between doctors and patients and, still worse, could aggravate and expand human psychological disorders. In addition, inherent is the unbridled desire that seeks to gain control over human life and death is the danger of destroying, not only respect for life, but life itself. As a Buddhist, I am convinced that the Buddhist view of life and death and of life force provides a basis for overcoming the problems facing modern medical science.

Since its very inception, Buddhism has consistently taught a philosophy for coming face-to-face with and triumphing over the four sufferings: birth, old age, sickness and death. For example, the Buddhist principle that delusion and enlightenment are both inherent in life, as well as the teachings, concerning the method by which karma may be transformed, provides valuable insights for conquering stress-related illnesses and psychopathological conditions. Moreover, the doctrines of the oneness of life and its environment (*esho funi*) and the oneness of body and mind (*shikishin funi*) are complete expressions of the true nature of human life. I firmly believe that the Buddhist view of birth and death as the ideal way to live, provide the religious and philosophical foundation for challenging all of today's ethical problems.

In his "Ongi Kuden" (Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings), interpreting the meaning of the Treasure Tower, Nichiren Daishonin states, "Its four sides represent birth, old age, sickness and death. With these four aspects, we adorn the Treasure Tower of our lives" He taught that in confronting and in overcoming the four sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death – the fundamental problems of human existence - one may display the greatest glory and brilliance in life and win true victory as a human being.

Become Both Outstanding Physicians and Leaders

Message to commemorate Doctors Division Day, Sept. 15, 1996, World Tribune, Oct 26, 1996, p.12.

Buddhism has always held the field of medicine in highest esteem. Among Shakyamuni's direct disciples, there was a renowned physician named Jivaka. He was called the King of Medicine for his ability to cure a host of serious illnesses. It is even said that he performed surgery in those ancient times to clear intestinal obstructions and remove brain tumors. Jivaka's name derives from the Sanskrit for "giving life" or "enlivening". I think this name clearly expresses the function of the doctors division, whose members are striving energetically to strengthen the people's life force and vitality and to prolong life.

Jivaka, also a minister of the kingdom of Magadha, played a significant role among Shakyamuni's disciples. He engaged himself in a magnificent struggle to save lives, safeguard the people and protect the correct teaching of Lotus Sutra. In this achievement, he leaves us a message, the importance of which transcends the ages.

In this connection, basing my remarks on the Goshō, I will briefly discuss three points. First: "Face all obstacles courageously!" Nichiren Daishonin writes: Because King Ajatashatru took Devadatta and the six non-Buddhist teachers (1) as his mentors and opposed Shakyamuni, the lord of teachings, all the people of the kingdom of Magadha became enemies of Buddhism, and the 580,000 clansmen of the king also opposed the Buddha's disciples. Among them, only Minister Jivaka was the Buddha's disciple. The great king disapproved of his minister's devotion to the Buddha... But in the end he (the king) discarded the heretical doctrines of the other six ministers (2) and took faith in the true teaching that Jivaka espoused. (*Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1 p. 810).

Jivaka single handedly bore the brunt of attacks made by literally hundreds of thousands of foes. Most important, he took resolute action to thwart the schemes of Devadatta – a base traitor who had forgotten his debt of gratitude to Shakyamuni – and win a magnificent victory. This individual of remarkable strength and outright fearlessness was truly a predecessor of the members of the doctors division.

As second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda asked, "Didn't President Makiguchi give his very life for the sake of the Mystic Law like Bodhisattva Medicine King (Jpn Yakuo), who set his own body aflame so that its bright light might illuminate the world?" A religion whose followers are unwilling to give their lives for their beliefs does not deserve to be called a religion. The unwavering dedication and commitment of its followers are the greatest and loftiest sources of pride any religion can have. In this respect, I feel that the name bodhisattva Medicine King must be another name for the doctors division members.

Many people depend on physicians. In most societies, when people find out that someone is a doctor, they automatically look up to him or her with a special trust and confidence. Physicians the world over are highly regarded for their work in saving lives. I hope you will sincerely respond to the trust and expectations that people place in you. May this become the pride of the doctors division members, the physicians who embrace the Mystic Law.

Second: “Become the standard-bearers of a ‘health revolution’ to protect life, so infinitely precious”. How did Jivaka become a great physician of eternal renown and a person of outstanding character? It was due to the strict training he received from his mentor, Shakyamuni, and his ongoing growth and self development through practicing Buddhism together with his comrades in faith. One day, Jivaka invited Shakyamuni to his home. He also invited the Buddha’s disciples, with the one exception of Suddhipanthaka (Jpn. Surihandoku) (3), known for his extremely poor memory. Shakyamuni could not condone Jivaka’s arrogance in looking down on this simple, yet sincere, disciple. All who embrace Buddhism are irreplaceable and noble disciples of the Buddha. Shakyamuni rebuked Jivaka, telling him that if he failed to understand that each disciple was worthy of the highest respect and instead scorned and disparaged them, he would only be hurting himself. In this way, Jivaka came to understand the depth of his mentor’s concern for his disciples and the immense compassion he had for all people. And he expanded his state of life to become an excellent and compassionate physician who lived and worked among the people.

In the Gosho, Nichiren Daishonin urges one of his followers who has taken ill to go to Shijo Kingo, who was not only an excellent physician but a votary of the Lotus Sutra. The Daishonin pays tribute to Shijo Kingo as a person who never gives in to defeat and shows the greatest concern for friends (Gosho Zenshu, p. 986).

I hope you, the members of the doctors division, will wholeheartedly treasure those who have striven - and continue to strive with all their might - to propagate the Mystic Law, while struggling to surmount many obstacles. I ask you to make every effort to support and encourage them in their “health revolution.”

Buddhism – faith in the Daishonin’s teaching – provides us the power to cure the ills of life in its totality. And a doctor’s job is to cure illness. Therefore, as doctors of the mystic Law, you have been entrusted with a profound mission by Nichiren Daishonin.

Third: “become a beacon of trust in society.” A beacon is always bright and people look to it constantly for guidance and direction. The Daishonin characterizes Jivaka and other great physicians as “treasures of the age.” He likens them to guiding lights, beacons. They are models, he says, for doctors in all ages to come.

The Daishonin urges Shijo King, his disciple and a skilled physician: “Bring forth the great power of faith and establish your reputation among all the people of Kamakura and the rest of Japan as “Shijo Kingo of the Hokke sect.”(4) (MW-2 (2nd ed.) 231). I regard this passage as the eternal guideline for the doctors division.

I hope you will strive to be both outstanding physicians and leaders. Wherever you go and whatever you do – whether talking at an SGI seminar or discussion meeting, giving personal guidance or telling others about the Daishonin’s Buddhism – may you give joy, hope and courage to all you encounter. In your capacity as doctors, each and every one of you can truly touch the lives of countless others. With this conviction, please illuminate the lives of all around you.

In “The True Entity of Life” Nichiren Daishonin says: Exert yourself in the two ways of practice and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism. You must not only persevere yourself, you must also teach others. Both practice and study arise from faith. Teach others to the best of your ability, even if only a single sentence or phrase. (MW-I, 95). Please engrave these golden words in your hearts.

I am confident that the solid growth and progress of the doctors division will become a great driving force for the further expansion of kosen-rufu. Thank you very much.

Illuminating the World with the Life-affirming Wisdom of the Mystic Law

SGI Newsletter No. 7654: Joint Conference (WD/YWD Doctors’ Division and Nurses Group) at the Nagano Training Center, August 9th, 2008

“Norman Cousins (1915 -90), an American journalist and peace activist, who later went on to become a medical school professor dedicated to exploring the mind-body connection in health and healing, is an unforgettable friend. Dr. Cousins wrote: “The greatest force in the human body is the natural drive of the body to heal itself- but that force is not independent of the belief system [of the human being]’ which can translate expectations into physiological change. Nothing is more wondrous about the fifteen billion neurons in the human brain than their ability to convert thoughts, hopes, ideas, and attitudes into chemical substances. Everything begins, therefore, with belief. What we believe is the most powerful option of all [with regards to healing].’ Belief is the origin of all things, and the ultimate form of belief is faith in the Mystic Law.”

Sept. 3, 2008, World Tribune, 10-17-08.

[Norman Cousins] remarked, “One of the main functions of the doctor is to engage to the fullest the patient’s own ability to mobilize the forces of mind and body in turning back disease.” Dr. Cousins argued that hope, confidence and the will to live can play a crucial role in optimizing the body’s healing

powers. Dr. Cousins also declared, “The good physician is not only a scientist but a philosopher.” In order to protect the lives of your patients, I hope that you, as physicians, will not only stay abreast of the latest medical research but also proudly continue to study the greatest philosophy there is, the Mystic Law.

Dr. Felix Unger is a renowned Austrian heart surgeon and the president of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. He has stern words for doctors’ attitudes toward patients, saying “[It is] outrageous that the patient, whom [the physician] ought to serve with humility, is degraded to a mere object and that the rights of the patient as a human being with dignity should be treated as an afterthought....A true physician thinks, serves and acts for the welfare of his patients.” Good physicians humbly serve their patients, respect them as individuals and seek to communicate with them heart to heart. The members of the doctors division, who are dedicated to offering compassionate medical care, are incredibly important. Dr. Unger also sounds a warning for the medical profession. He notes that, in placing such high priority of medical treatment, modern medicine has tended to focus only on the patient’s physical condition. But since people are not merely physical beings, he says, doctors need to treat their patients as human beings and show warmth and care toward them in their speech and actions. Buddhism teaches the principle of the oneness of body and mind. The physical and mental aspects of our being are one and inseparable.

Our members in the medical and nursing professions are warmly encouraging their patients with their bright, confident voices. The hope they impart to others doubtlessly contributes immensely to the recovery of their patients’ health.

The Chinese historical text *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian (also known as Ssuma-Ch’ien) relates the story of the renowned Chinese physician Bian Que (also known as Pien Ch’ueh). In one of this letters, Nicherin also makes mention of Bian Que, writing: “There were physicians in China named Huang Ti and Pien Chueh, and there were physicians in India named Water Holder and Jivaka. There were the treasures of their age and teachers to the physicians of later times.” (WND vol. I, p. 937). Wherever he went, he strove to conform with the local needs.” Bian que traveled throughout the vast land of China and went among the people to treat them. I hope that all our doctors’ division members will also become respected physicians like Bian Que, committed to working for the welfare of the people.

On Being Human: Where Ethics, Medicine and Spirituality Converge, *Daisaku Ikeda, molecular biologist/geneticist Renee Simard, bioethicist Guy Bourgeault dialogue (p.53) “The Nature of Health”*

Ikeda: Nichiren Daishonin taught that "the four sufferings of birth, old age sickness and death are the nature of the three fold world." In other words, since all living things must pass through birth, old age,

sickness, and death, illness is a natural component of the life cycle. It does not mean the defeat of life. On the contrary, the struggle to confront illness enables us to celebrate the victory of the human experience. Efforts toward fulfillment are the dynamic of life, and this struggle is the constant equilibrium that you mentioned. Nichiren Daishonin also said, "Illness gives rise to the resolve to attain the way." Sickness helps people pioneer a more fulfilled way of living by reflecting of the meaning and dignity of life. The very process of overcoming illness tempers body and mind and enables us to create a still broader equilibrium. This is the source of the radiance of good health.

"Death with Dignity: Overcoming the Suffering of Death"

[p.121] Ikeda: My mentor, Josei Toda, died with dignity. From his sickbed, he encouraged others and answered questions about Buddhism. Until his last breath, he gave advice to people in distress. All his life, he radiated health in the true sense of the word, even after becoming ill.

Bourgeault: My mentor, Mr. Cormier, was a champion of human rights who maintained his dignity, too. "I'm not sick. It is just my body that is being attacked by cancer." He fulfilled the definition of health as something a person can deal with physically, psychologically, economically, socially and culturally. He never regarded his cancer as a "sickness" but as a condition he could continue to cope with in the above ways.

Ikeda: True health does not mean the absence of illness. Rather, it is a life-state characterized by openness to the hearts and minds of others and to the environment. It is constant readiness to exercise the creative ability to serve society. To maintain health in that sense until the last moment is to die with dignity.

Living Buddhism, July-August 2008, SGI President Ikeda's Lecture Series "On Prolonging One's Life Span," p. 74.

Life is tenacious: it is endowed with the impulse to survive and the power to heal. The "highly effective medicine" for drawing forth these innate properties is the Mystic Law. Ultimately, it is we ourselves who cure our illness, while the decision to undertake this battle to do so arises from faith. Nichiren indicates this in his reference to the "treasure of faith" (WND-1, 955).

To see illness as an opportunity to transform our karma – this strong spirit and resolve can break through all obstacles and devilish functions and open wide the path to happiness. Like a rocket blasting out of the earth's atmosphere, the passionate conviction of faith that comes from viewing illness as an opportunity to transform our karma can become a powerful engine propelling us forward not only in this existence but throughout eternity, enabling us to freely savor everlasting happiness.

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In our attitude toward illness, we need to be fearless, yet at the same time we must not make light of the situation.

Becoming ill in itself is certainly not a sign of defeat. Even the Buddha, who is said to have “few ills and few worries” (LS, 214), struggles with sickness from time to time. Accordingly, there will be times when we are confronted with illness. The important point above all is not to be defeated mentally or emotionally by the prospect of being ill. Faith is the source of the fighting spirit to stand up to illness. Therefore, as we noted earlier, Nichiren Daishonin first of all talks about the “treasure of faith.”

Next, it is only natural that we exert ourselves in practical and concrete ways to get well. To simply think, *I'm practicing Buddhism, so I'll be OK*, or to dismiss an illness as “nothing to worry about,” reflects a mistaken understanding of faith and amounts to disrespect for one's own life. It is vital that we take action to “quickly conquer our illness.” Therefore, Nichiren admonishes the lay nun Toki not to begrudge making efforts to cure her illness.

The Mystic Law is the fundamental power for defeating the hindrances of illness and death. “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is like the roar of a lion” (“Reply to Kyo'o,” WND-1, 412), Nichiren writes. Of key importance in conquering illness are a positive spirit, an effective curative treatment and a vigorous life force. And in this regard, chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is especially crucial in terms of strengthening ourselves mentally and emotionally, getting the most out of the treatment available to us and summoning forth a strong life force.

The struggle with illness becomes an opportunity for us to realize this glorious truth. As Nichiren says, “Illness gives rise to the resolve to attain the way” (“The Good Medicine for All Ills.” WND-1, 937). If a practitioner who upholds faith in the Mystic Law becomes ill, it definitely has some profound meaning. It could be said that confronting illness is one route to awakening to the eternity of life. President Toda often said, “A person who has overcome a major illness knows how to deeply savor life.” Also, those who wage a struggle against illness with such confidence are champions of faith for living long and healthy lives.

A member of the doctors division remarked that people who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in their battle against illness always brim with appreciation and smiles, an attitude that is itself a sign of their victory over their illness.

Of course, people suffer all kinds of sickness and diseases, and the severity or degree of their illness varies. In some cases, a person may become bedridden or physically incapacitated. But those who, through chanting, are battling or have battled illness, shine from the depths of their beings. They have nothing to worry about, because their lives are infused with Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. They are assured beyond a doubt of enjoying good fortune and benefit throughout eternity.

Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death and Everything In Between, A Buddhist View of Life, 2nd Edition, Middleway Press, Santa Monica, CA 2003.

[pp. 75-76] No one can deny modern medicine's contributions to the curing of disease. It would be foolish to ignore it. Otherwise, faith descends into fanaticism. Yet for all its impressive technology, effective pharmaceuticals and elaborate diagnostic techniques, modern medical science is not omnipotent. Moreover, its treatments often tend toward a materialistic or mechanistic view of the human organism, neglecting to look at life as a phenomenon involving both body and mind. Whereas modern medicine largely relies on drugs and technology, Buddhist medicine concentrates on the patient's role incurring his or her own illness. We might say that medical science fights illness with scientific knowledge, while Buddhism develops human wisdom so that we may find our own rhythm and strengthen our life force. This assists the efficacy of medical treatment and also helps us conquer illness through our own natural healing powers. We must use medical resources wisely in fighting illness. Buddhism gives us the wisdom to use medicine properly. Wisdom is the basic ingredient to health, to long life and to happiness.

Buddhism regards disease as an external manifestation of internal disharmony. Further, Buddhist medicine maintains that the quality of human life or health is determined by the balance of an indescribably vast number of factors, each in a constant state of flux. Establishing equilibrium among these factors is little short of miraculous; so it is hardly surprising that the balance is disturbed periodically, resulting in illness. The strength of Buddhist medicine is that it focuses on activating the unlimited potentials and energies inherent in the individual human life to restore and sustain this robust, dynamic equilibrium. When we access our fundamental life force, no illness can prevent us from living a fulfilling life. (LB 10/1/2002, p. 30) Nichiren Daishonin writes, "Of all medicines, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the best medicine" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 335). From the fundamental aspect of life itself, the Mystic Law is the "wonderful medicine," the "highly efficient medicine" that heals, revitalizes, and relieves human beings of suffering.