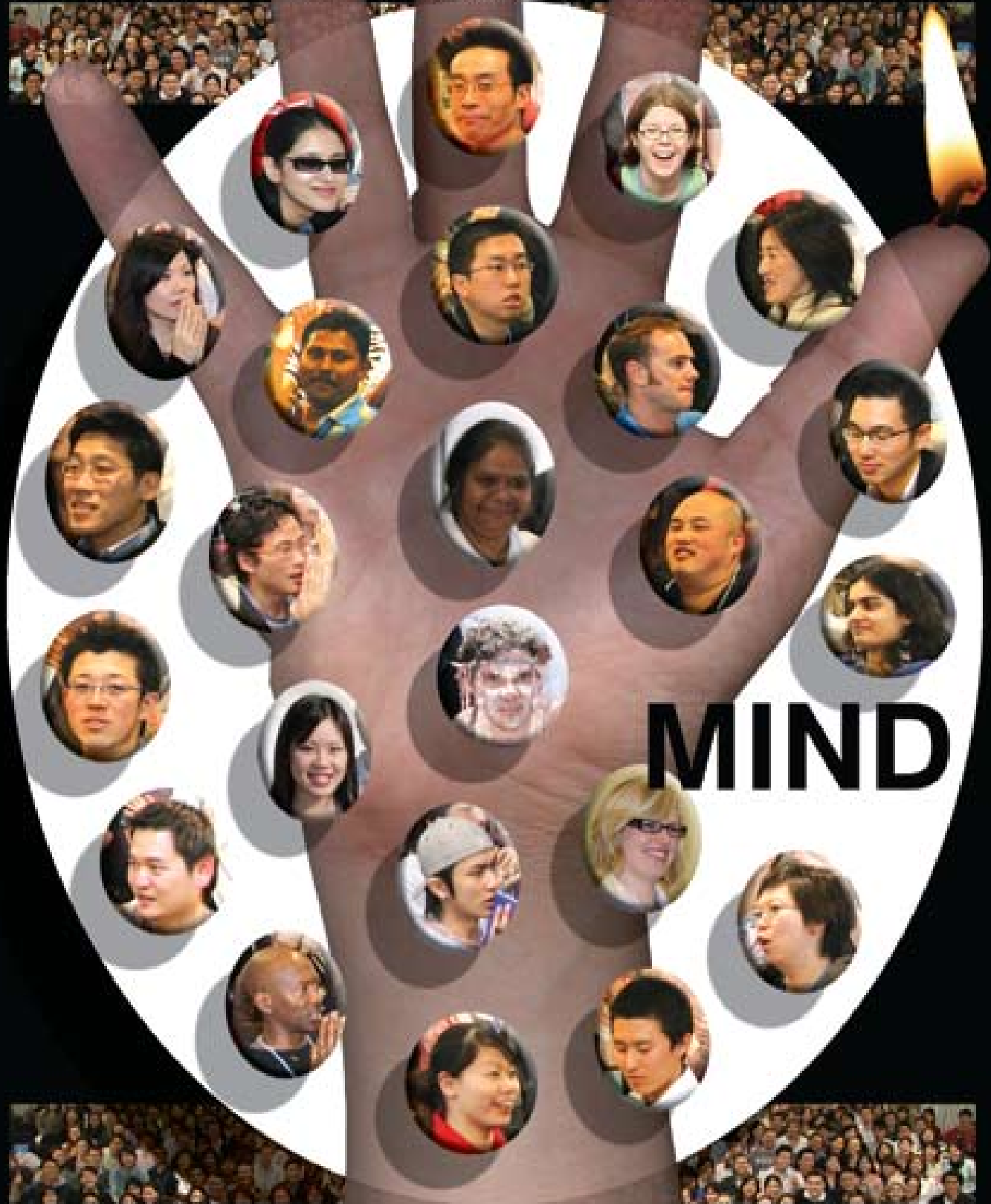


Study Material

November -2006

# DEPENDENT-ORIGINATION

THE WELLSPRING FOR A CENTURY OF LIFE, HEART AND SPIRIT



# MIND

**SESSION 3**

Many in Body, One in Mind - The Spirit of Courage.

**SESSION 4**

Global Citizenship and the Path of Respect - Humanity's (our) Mission Lies in Creating and Sustaining a Century of Life.

**SESSION THREE:  
MANY IN BODY ONE IN MIND - THE SPIRIT OF COURAGE**

**GUIDELINES FOR SESSION THREE**

**Many in Body, One in Mind - The Spirit of Courage**

**Aim:**

To show proof of the mentor's vision of unity and thereby, embrace diversity and polish our unique potential to live a life of creativity, harmony and empathy.

**Method:**

Introduce participants who are giving an introduction and experience based on this session's topic.

Discuss the questions for this week's session.

Ask for two pairs of study partners to volunteer – one pair to prepare a brief introduction and the other pair to prepare one of the partner's experience related to session four's topic.

All study partners meet and discuss how the material relates to their own daily life, with those study partners selected, meeting to work on their presentations for session four.



“The Buddha longs for disciples who will actively struggle alongside him. . . Those who only expect to be protected by the mentor still have quite a way to go before they can call themselves real disciples. It is by striving in the same manner as the mentor to protect our fellow human beings that we qualify as true disciples”

*(Ikeda, World of Nichiren Daishonin's writings, Instalment 4)*

## OVERVIEW

At any given moment we are experiencing, and being influenced by, the effects of all actions created by ourselves and everyone and everything else in the universe. At the same time, we are creating causes that influence the whole universe. This is ‘dependent origination’; a great tapestry of interconnected relations. Each cause in itself contains the effect and each effect is the fertile ground for another cause. In this way, each time we chant the daimoku, we are experiencing the effects of Nichiren’s actions in proclaiming Nam-myoho-renge-kyo as the law of life, and his subsequent actions to teach this practice, just as we experience the effects of the contributions of the three Presidents of the Soka Gakkai in propagating Nichiren’s Buddhism. At the same time, when we chant the daimoku for kosen-rufu with the same heart as our mentors, we are making causes for the enlightenment of ourselves, those around us, and the future of humanity.

In addition to the mentor and disciple relationship, the heritage of the ultimate law of life is preserved and passed on through the disciples who work, in any given lifetime, in perfect unity towards the realisation of the mentors’ dream: absolute happiness for all humankind. For this reason, Nichiren exhorts us to transcend differences so that we become ‘inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim’ (Heritage of the

Ultimate Law of Life, *WND*, p.217). Transcending differences means striving ceaselessly to cultivate the positive qualities in oneself and others. Only through appreciating our interdependence and the infinite extent of our relations, do we, as practitioners, connect like fish and water and practise ‘Many in Body, One in Mind’.

The spirit of courage lies in showing proof of the oneness of mentor and disciple. By embracing the mentor’s vision of unity, we have a common goal and are able to embrace diversity and polish our unique potential to live a life of creativity, harmony and empathy. Thus, Nichiren Buddhism is a teaching to awaken people to the same life condition as the Buddha. As one by one, people’s minds are awakened to this life condition, and an unbreakable network is created, the Buddha’s dream of human happiness is achieved. Soka Gakkai International, Australia is a body of practitioners with the same unity of purpose to contribute to the ‘peace of the land’. Its ‘make up’ is one of extreme diversity – in cultures, characters, ages, levels of education and political and personal orientations in the way we live. The embodiment of the mentor’s spirit is our vow to work together in harmony for the happiness of society with belief in each other’s potential.

### Many in Body, One in Mind (*Itai Doshin*)

Buddhism places great stress on the human bonds that form the context in which the teachings (the Law or dharma) are practised and transmitted. As described in the study material, this web of connection can be compared to the threads of a woven fabric. While the teachings themselves are accorded highest value and Nichiren himself often reminded his followers to “rely on the Law and not the person,” his writings are also filled with references to the importance of developing and maintaining harmonious unity. As he wrote in one letter, “All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the spirit of many in body but one in mind, transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim.” (*WND*, p. 217) This letter was written at a time when the small community of Nichiren Buddhists was facing severe persecution from the feudal authorities. Nichiren encouraged them not to give up hope despite being few in number, writing, “If the spirit of many in body but one in mind prevails among the people they will achieve all their goals, whereas if one in body but different in mind, they can achieve nothing remarkable.” (*ibid.* p.217)

The expression Nichiren uses, “many in body but one in mind,” consists of four Chinese characters that could also be rendered, “different in body, same in spirit.” What is crucial here is that the type of unity aspired to is not a mechanical uniformity, imposed or coerced from without. Rather, it is unity that has at its heart respect for the diverse and unique qualities of each individual (“many in body”). Such unity arises, to quote SGI President Ikeda, when people “treasure each other as unique and irreplaceable individuals, and try to bring out the best in each other.” In contrast, he adds, “‘many in body and many in mind’ is a situation of utter disunity, while ‘one in body and one in mind’ is one controlled by group thinking in which individuality is ignored and totalitarianism ultimately results. Neither situation allows people to manifest their unique abilities.” The phrase “one in mind” does

not mean to adopt a standardized, uniform set of values or way of thinking. Rather, it points to a shared, yet deeply personal, commitment to an overarching goal or ideal. It offers a model for solidarity among people working for positive change in the world. Each person has a unique mission that only they can fulfill; their own special contribution to make. A spirit of respectful and spontaneous collaboration toward a common ideal creates the environment in which each person’s unique qualities and talents can be fully realised.

In the early 1940s, when Japan was in the sway of totalitarian fascism, the founding president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, criticized the prevailing official dogma of “self-abnegation for the public good” which was used to justify unquestioning sacrifice in support of the war effort. “Self-denial,” he wrote, “is a lie. The true way is to seek happiness for both oneself and for all others.” He declared that the organization would be dedicated to enabling individuals to develop their unique capacities as they contribute to the flourishing of human society.

Makiguchi also noted the irony that evil-minded people actually find it relatively easy to develop solidarity--united by a shared interest in material or political gain. People of goodwill, being more spiritually self-sufficient, he wrote, tend to overlook the importance of unity. History is filled with tragic examples in which the failure of people of goodwill to work together has effectively ceded the field to the forces of hatred and destruction. It is also clear that only a broad-based coming together of people committed to a more humane future will enable us to meet the challenges of the new century. The Buddhist ideal of “Many in Body, One in Mind” offers a vision of the unity of diversity. It is the unity of autonomous individuals committed to the work of self-reformation, concern for others and faith in the possibilities of a better future. This vision is embodied in the SGI.

## Excerpts from The World of Nichiren Daishonin's Writings, Instalment [7]

### The Exquisite Fabric of the Unity of Many in Body, One in Mind

**SGI President Ikeda:** The mentor-disciple relationship in Buddhism is a life-to-life connection based on the Mystic Law. Generally speaking, it is a relationship between two people that takes place when the mentor, or teacher, has something to communicate to the disciple, or student—whether it be knowledge, a skill, or a craft. In the case of Buddhism, however, it is the Law that the mentor is communicating. The mentor-disciple relationship is necessary in order to correctly practise the Law and ensure its transmission.

Whether engaging in his own practice or instructing his followers in faith, Nichiren Daishonin himself always placed great weight on the admonition, “Rely on the Law and not upon persons.”<sup>1</sup> He also said that we should “seek out the votary of the Lotus Sutra and make him our teacher” (*cf. WND, p.278*).

Faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism is always based on the Law. We practise the Law and we spread the Law. Achieving the lofty and great objectives of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime and realizing kosen-rufu requires that we be united in spirit and advance with unity of purpose. Toward that end, a teacher who correctly practises the Law is vital. That is why the Daishonin's successor Nikko Shonin strictly stated: “Without following the correct relationship of mentor and disciple, there is no attaining Buddhahood.”<sup>1</sup>

In addition to mentor and disciple, there is another human relationship that is based on the Law. That is, the bond of comrades in faith. The ideal expression of this bond is found in the principle of “Many in Body, One in Mind.”

The harmonious body of Buddhist practitioners (Skt. samgha) can be viewed from two perspectives. These can be likened to the warp and woof in weaving. When weaving a piece of fabric on a loom, the warp is first stretched out lengthwise, and then crossed by the woof.

The warp represents the bond of mentor and disciple, and the woof the bond of fellow members. When these are interlaced, a splendid brocade of kosen-rufu is created. In most woven textiles, the warp provides the fabric's structure, while the woof forms the pattern or design. Similarly, as long as the fundamental bond of mentor and disciple is supporting the Soka Gakkai, a wonderful pattern of the solidarity of disciples may be fashioned.

The members of the Soka Gakkai are people dedicated to accomplishing kosen-rufu. Our organization is a network of friends bound by the lofty aspiration to realise peace for all humanity. We believe in our ability to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime and seek to enable all others to do the same. Specifically, this means we believe in the same Gohonzon and dedicate our lives to working for kosen-rufu. We “rely on the Law, not upon persons.”

“Transcending all differences” means that among the Daishonin's disciples, there is no opposition or rejection of others. “Becoming as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim” could be understood as the spirit to treasure one another as irreplaceable individuals, and to try to bring out the best in each other. In this way, “Many in Body, One in Mind” means uniting in spirit and supporting one another.

“Many in Body, One in Mind” is indeed the supreme organizational principle that cherishes each individual and enables them to realise their full potential. “Many in Body” reflects the understanding

<sup>1</sup> In his “Reply to the Lay Believers in the Province of Sado,” Nikko Shonin states: “The Daishonin teaches following the correct path of mentor and disciple to attain Buddhahood. If one makes even the slightest mistake in the way of mentor and disciple, then even though one upholds the Lotus Sutra one will fall into the hell of incessant suffering.” Nichiko Hori, *Fuji Nikko Shonin Shoden* (Detailed Biography of Nikko Shonin) (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 1963), p. 429.

that each of us has a unique mission, talent, and set of circumstances. “One in mind” means that despite our individuality, we need to be united in spirit. In contrast, “many in body and many in mind” is a situation of utter disunity, while “one in body and one in mind” is one controlled by group thinking in which individuality is ignored and totalitarianism ultimately results. Neither situation allows people to manifest their unique abilities.

Though a group may appear to be “one in body,” if the hearts of its members are not united, it will not be able to accomplish anything. On the other hand, though a group may appear to be “different in body,” if the hearts of its members are one, anything is possible. . . .it is clear that “mind,” means faith aimed at realising kosen-rufu. Kosen-rufu is the great wish of the Buddha who seeks to lead all people to enlightenment. It is the cornerstone of the Lotus Sutra. “One in mind” means making this great wish of the Buddha one’s own and courageously working for kosen-rufu.

**Saito:** The Daishonin says: “Toki [Jonin], Saburo Saemon-no-jo [Shijo Kingo], Kawanobe, Acharya Yamato, and the rest of you, gentlemen and priests,<sup>2</sup> should read this letter to one another and listen. In this defiled age, you should always talk together and never cease to pray for your next life” (*WND*, p.449). I sense that his reference to “this defiled age” is highly significant.

**President Ikeda:** Yes. It is because we are living in a “defiled age” that we need to encourage each other as we advance. Buddhist practice is not something that we can carry out on our own. For, as the Daishonin says, “the winds of fame and profit blow violently, and the lamp of Buddhist practice is easily extinguished” (*WND*, p.1027). It is vital that we encourage and support one another as we make our way forward. We need to be “good friends” to each other.

It may be possible to carry out one’s Buddhist practice secluded in the mountains, cutting oneself off from negative influences or bad friends, like the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai of China did. But for people living in today’s society carrying out their Buddhist practice in the course of their daily lives, the path to Buddhahood lies in our effort to bring our humanity to shine while living amid evil influences, like “the lotus flower blooming in the water” (*LS15*, p.222). Being surrounded by good friends is therefore indispensable to doing our practice.

And the difficulty of practising Buddhism in the Latter Day is of a scope far greater than can generally be imagined. That’s because the Latter Day is an age overrun by erroneous teachings and false teachers that deceive people. In “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land,” the Daishonin says: “How pitiful to think that, in the space of a few decades, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of people have been deluded by these devilish teachings and in so many cases confused as to the true teachings of Buddhism” (*WND*, p.15).


That is why the unity of many in body, one in mind is so important. The Daishonin says, “Though evils may be numerous, they cannot prevail over a single great truth” (*WND*, p.618). To triumph over the combined forces of evil, people of good must become strong. They must unite. If good people do not prevail, people of evil intent will rule the world.

**Morinaka:** It seems strange that good people should have a hard time uniting while evil people do so easily.

**President Ikeda:** It’s analogous to how water readily collects in a depression in the ground. Since evil people have shallow objectives, they quickly collude with each other based on mutual ambitions or

<sup>2</sup> Kawanobe is believed to have been a lay priest who was arrested at the time of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution and incarcerated in an underground cell. No detailed information is known about Acharya Yamato.

<sup>3</sup> The Daishonin writes: “The fourth volume of the Lotus Sutra states, ‘If there were a person who spoke only one word to curse the lay persons or monks or nuns who uphold and preach the Lotus Sutra, then his offense would be even graver than that of cursing Shakyamuni Buddha to his face for the space of a kalpa.’ The Lotus Sutra also says, ‘[If anyone sees a person who accepts and upholds this sutra and tries to expose the faults or evils of that person], whether what he speaks is true or not, [he will in his present existence be afflicted with white leprosy].’ Take these teachings to heart, and always remember that believers in the Lotus Sutra should absolutely be the last to abuse one another” (*WND*, 756).

A serene landscape featuring a calm body of water reflecting a dense line of green trees under a blue sky with light clouds. The water is still, creating a clear mirror image of the trees and sky. The trees are tall and thin, with lush green foliage. The sky is a pale blue with soft, white clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

“Strength is Happiness. Strength is itself victory. In weakness and cowardice there is no happiness. When you wage a struggle, you might win or you might lose. But regardless of the short-term outcome, the very fact of your continuing to struggle is proof of your victory as a human being.”

Daisaku Ikeda.

interests. How important it is to have unity that is based on a lofty objective. The precious organization of kosen-rufu absolutely must not be destroyed. Construction requires tenacious and painstaking effort, while destruction takes but an instant.

**Saito:** Even trusting relationships that have been cultivated over many years may be suddenly ruined by some divisive force. Such is the fearful nature of devilish functions, which is why we must be able to see through them.

**President Ikeda:** In “The Fourteen Slanders,” there is also some very strict guidance against slandering one’s fellow practitioners.<sup>3</sup> We are all Buddhas. Therefore, to criticise another is to do the same to a Buddha. Because we are all Buddhas, we should respect each other. The Soka Gakkai should abound with the spirit described in the passage, “You should rise and greet him from afar, showing him the same respect you would a Buddha” (*LS28*, p.324). The Daishonin goes so far as to say that when people get into the habit of criticising others, “They never rid themselves of this wrong attitude, so they seem to be destined for the evil paths” (*WND*, p.757). Therefore, he says, “You should respect one another” as Buddhas (*WND*, p.757). He also asserts that we should be kind to each other, just like Shakyamuni and Many Treasures who in the “Treasure Tower” chapter of the Lotus Sutra share a seat (in the Treasure Tower).<sup>4</sup>

**Morinaka:** The thought of two Buddhas quarrelling is really preposterous!

**President Ikeda:** The important thing is faith directed toward realising kosen-rufu. If we are



<sup>4</sup> “No matter if he is a demon or an animal, if someone proclaims even a single verse or phrase of the Lotus Sutra, you must respect him as you would the Buddha. This is what the sutra means when it says, ‘You should rise and greet him from afar, showing him the same respect you would a Buddha.’ You should respect one another as Shakyamuni and Many Treasures did at the ceremony in the ‘Treasure Tower’ chapter” (*WND*, p.757).

<sup>5</sup> “A friend in the orchid room” indicates a person of virtue. The implication is that the company of a virtuous person works as a good influence, just as one is imbued with fragrance on entering a room filled with orchids. It is said that mugwort supported by hemp plants grows upright.



striving wholeheartedly for kosen-rufu, we will have no time to quarrel. The Daishonin repeatedly admonishes against the folly of fellow practitioners squabbling with each other in front of the enemy, comparing such behavior to the “sea bird and the clam,” who were both caught by the fisherman because they were preoccupied with arguing among themselves.

**Saito:** That’s in a letter addressed to Hyoe no Sakan. The Daishonin tells him:

If you squabble among yourselves, you will end up like the quarreling sea bird and clam in the Chinese parable. Likewise, your enemies will take advantage of your disunity. Chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo and be circumspect in your behavior at all times. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p.1108)

**President Ikeda:** It is vital that we stand up together with the same aspiration and that we talk openly with each other. In any situation, dialogue is a positive endeavour. It builds solidarity and creates unity. To reject others only has negative repercussions. It invites division and leads to destruction. The point is to meet and to talk. It is only natural that our perspective may at times differ from that of others. But dialogue gives rise to trust, even among those who don’t see eye to eye. In society as well, dialogue is the foundation for peace, while rejection is the gateway to war.

**Morinaka:** I truly feel that your efforts, President Ikeda, in constructing a network of good thinking people across the globe are a mainstay for world peace. Specifically, I am talking about your past contributions to the restoration of diplomatic relations between Japan and China, as well as to rapprochement between China and the Soviet Union. Also, there are high expectations today that your dialogues will help build a bridge between the worlds of Christianity and Islam.

**President Ikeda:** The Daishonin always urged his

followers to engage in dialogue and develop the unity of many in body, one in mind. He would say things like: “Even a stranger, if you open up your heart to him, may be willing to lay down his life for you” (*WND*, p.444); and “Please tell the people of Suruga that they should be of the same mind” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p.1435). He also said: “You should always talk with each other to free yourselves from the sufferings of birth and death and attain the pure land of Eagle Peak, where you will nod to each other and speak in one mind” (*WND*, p.909). There are indeed many such statements in the Daishonin’s writings.

After all, the bonds between comrades in faith who have struggled together in the effort to achieve kosen-rufu are eternal. There may be times when you think, “One lifetime with that person is enough for me!” But the important thing is that we work with such people toward fundamentally transforming our state of life. As the Daishonin says, “You have associated with a friend in the orchid room and have become as straight as mugwort growing among hemp”<sup>5</sup> (*WND*, p.23). The point is that people change. And if we didn’t change for the better, what would be the point of our Buddhist practice? The Daishonin also writes, “The dove has changed into a hawk, the sparrow into a clam” (*WND*, p.23).<sup>6</sup>

**Saito:** If we strive together for kosen-rufu to the very end, by the time we arrive at Eagle Peak, we will have done so much human revolution together that all our interpersonal conflicts will be resolved!

**President Ikeda:** In any event, it is vital that fellow members upholding the Mystic Law have mutual respect. We need to encourage one another as we advance together on the long and difficult road of kosen-rufu. We need to advance with the unity of many in body, one in mind, always being “good friends” to each other.

<sup>6</sup> Expressions taken from early Chinese literature that indicate dramatic change.

*All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the spirit of many in body but one in mind, transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate Law of life and death. Herein lies the true goal of Nichiren's propagation. When you are so united, even the great desire for widespread propagation can be fulfilled. But if any of Nichiren's disciples disrupt the unity of many in body but one in mind, they would be like warriors who destroy their own castle from within (WND, p.217).*

*Nichiren and his followers are few, because they are different in body, but united in mind, they will definitely accomplish their great mission of widely propagating the Lotus Sutra. Though evils may be numerous, they cannot prevail over a single great truth, just as many raging fires are quenched by a single shower of rain. This principle also holds true with Nichiren and his followers. (WND, p.618).*

## STUDY PARTNER DISCUSSION AND EXERCISES

*Share any experiences at work, at home, in the community, in the SGIA, where you have transformed situations by 'transcending differences'. Is there a difference in your attitude in each of these environments? Why? Discuss how the spirit of oneness of mentor and disciple may allow us to transform our circumstances.*

*What does it take to see the good qualities in people we don't like? Is this important? Why?*

*Discuss how our view of people or attitude towards people can change through dialogue and sharing our experiences.*



## SESSION FOUR: Global Citizenship and the Path of Respect - Humanity's (our) Mission Lies in Creating and Sustaining a Century of Life

### GUIDELINES FOR SESSION FOUR

#### **Aim:**

To understand and appreciate that our life-to-life connections based on respect forms a network of humanism for the realisation of kosen-rufu.

#### **Method:**

Introduce the participants who will be giving an introduction and experience for this week's session.

Discuss the questions for this week's topic.

Leave time for each participant to give an impression of the key points of their learning, experience of the course and determination they have made from the course as a whole.



*“From now on, every person’s history is that of the world as a whole. To meet the... century with hope and confidence, no matter how unprecedented the flow of events may seem, we must once and for all learn to look upon history as the human drama in which people play the decisive role. At the same time, we must all recognise that as fellow members of the global community, we need a sense of solidarity appropriate to the citizens of a single world” (Ikeda, ‘The making of history’ in ‘A New Humanism, 1996, p.109.)*

Introduced in Session one, the spirit of *On Establishment of the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land* (Jp. Rissho Ankoku Ron) is to relieve suffering and secure a peaceful society through a ‘people-centred’ philosophy of life. This is reflected in the spirit of respect for others and in contemporary terms by the values expressed in the concept of Global Citizenship. Buddhism is about how to live as a human being in the reality of society. Religion exists for people to grow in their humanity. It is about holding a conviction in the worthiness and dignity of all people. Because we uphold the supreme teaching of Buddhism we should try to live as a supreme human being. President Ikeda has been teaching us the way to live as a supreme human being. When we strive to improve our humanity, this Buddhism will spread even further.

Technological, economic and financial advancement have enhanced greater communication and personal freedom. However, as society progresses, there is also an increasing sense of isolation and mistrust. These contradictions are the direct consequences of the processes of globalisation. In addition, “man-made” conflicts and natural disasters have left many feeling overwhelmed and helpless. On the one hand we feel powerfully in charge, on the other we feel helplessly out of control.

What globalisation has ignored, significantly, is the most fundamental building block of any social framework – the human being. What kind of human being, though, is equipped to take on the challenges of this age? What kind of individual is needed to conquer selfish urges and accept responsibility for the betterment of society and the conditions of human existence today? It is the Global Citizen. President Ikeda has spoken extensively about this concept and has described the attributes of such an individual as having:

- (1) *The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.*
- (2) *The courage not to fear or deny differences, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and to grow from encounters with them.*
- (3) *The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy to those suffering in distant places* (Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship, 1996 address Delivered at Teachers College, Columbia University, 1996)

Not surprisingly, therefore, he sees the mission of the SGI as:

*“Unleashing the vitality of ordinary citizens- one by one- [as] the only certain way to bring into sight the horizons of a new civilization, a new era of people...the activities of the SGI constitute a humanistic movement based on Buddhism that seeks to develop robust individuals who can respond to the challenge of our age”* (A New Era of the People: Forging a Global Network of Robust Individuals, Peace Proposal, 2006)

Each of the founding presidents of the SGI has made invaluable contributions to the cultivation of such citizens: Makiguchi with ‘Value creation’; Toda with ‘Human Revolution’ and Ikeda with Humanism and ‘Global Citizenship’. Our mission as members of the SGI is to inherit these tenets and contribute to humanity by uniting as global citizens.

### **Bodhisattva Never Disparaging: The Path of Respect**

Our human revolution is absolutely crucial if we are to 'release' the deadlocks that are occurring on a global level, and it is up to each of us to make a commitment to practise the ideals of value creation and Buddhist humanism. It is in this that way we are able to make an ongoing commitment to transcending differences and embracing every human being as a precious and irreplaceable contributor to society.

“Dependent Origination” means that the enormity of the global threats and unpredictable disasters that impact on humanity as a whole, are absolutely related to each and every one of us. The message of hope from the Lotus Sutra is that everything comes down to the individual and that our humanity is expressed in relationship with other people, the antithesis of ego-driven individualism. By striving to create happy and value creating families and communities we can contribute to peace on a global level.

President Ikeda talks about the role of religion thus:

*“If the primary mission of religion is to forge robust and engaged individuals capable of creative responses to life’s challenges, then now, more than ever, it must rise to this task as the winds of uncertainty and change lash every corner of the world, every aspect of our lives.”* (ibid.)

It is exciting to think that the religion we are practising enables us to not only resist and overcome the negative influences within our lives and derive joy from this, it simultaneously gives us the impetus to support others to do the same. We must not underestimate the power of prayer to break through the deadlocks to peaceful coexistence that even attempts at dialogue and peace work cannot initially achieve. As soon as we take up the chanting of Nam Myoho Renge Kyo and determine to follow the path of respect, we are empowered and we are an indispensable protagonist of a revolution for peace. We are Global Citizens! How wondrous is our mission!

The human heart is capable of both great nobility and violent brutality. The ability to direct the orientation of our heart is one of the characteristics that distinguish us from other animals. One sees examples of the noble possibilities of the human spirit in such everyday instances as the willingness of a parent to sacrifice personal comfort for the sake of a child, or in a sudden act of kindness between strangers: an unselfish impulse and effort for the happiness of others. Yet the same heart can seethe with the dark currents of rage, bigotry, resentment and self-deprecation. To understand the horrific extent of these impulses within us, one has only to examine the experiences of ordinary people caught up in the all-too-pervasive hell of war.

It is the simple orientation of our hearts that ultimately determines whether we create societies characterised by joy and dignity or crippled by conflict, fear and despair. Buddhism analyses the dual potentialities of life in the following way: it teaches that all people without exception possess an enlightened Buddha nature that gives rise to limitless positive potential and which can bring wonder to our experience of living. An equally fundamental reality in the life of each person, however, is delusion or ignorance, which gives rise to evil. It is delusion, in fact, that makes it difficult for people to acknowledge their own capacity for either profound virtue or evil. How do we direct life toward its positive, value-creating potentials? This is a question that should be at the core of religion and ethics. The Lotus Sutra, which Nichiren Buddhism regards as the teaching that encapsulates the essence of the Buddha’s enlightenment, offers an apparently simple response. This is conveyed in the story of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. Never Disparaging is described as having lived in the remote past. It was his practice to bow in reverence to everyone he met and praise that person’s inherent Buddha nature. This, however, only provoked violence and abuse in return. Never Disparaging’s assertions

no doubt challenged people's deeply held negative assumptions about the nature of life. Their reactions, however, never managed to upset his convictions. He would simply retreat to a safe distance and repeat his obeisance, honoring the potential for good within his persecutors. Over time, as a result of these actions, Never Disparaging's humanity came to shine to the extent that those who had despised him were moved to become his disciples and thus entered the path of attaining Buddhahood themselves.

The sutra describes how, after relating this story, Shakyamuni Buddha reveals that Never Disparaging symbolised the causes made for Shakyamuni to reveal his enlightenment. There is a clear implication that his past behavior as depicted by the spirit of Never Disparaging is the original cause for Shakyamuni's enlightenment. Nichiren writes, "The heart of the Buddha's lifetime of teachings is the Lotus Sutra, and the heart of the practice of the Lotus Sutra is found in the 'Never Disparaging' chapter. What does Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's profound respect for people signify? The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being."

While Buddhism is often regarded as a very abstract philosophy, in practice, it is far from abstract. The Buddha nature is not described in theoretical terms but in the behavior of this humble bodhisattva. A Buddha is not an extraordinary being but a person who is deeply conscious of the positive potential within him-or herself and within all others, and who strives to help others bring forth this potential based on chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo. Nichiren clarifies that respecting others, as exemplified by the actions of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, constitutes the essence of Buddhist practice and the correct way for human beings to behave. Such respect is not limited to a passive regard for others; it is a bold engagement of our humanity. While simple in its formulation, in practice such an attitude represents the most challenging path. The effort required, however, is precisely that fundamental energy that can bring about the positive transformation of society. As SGI President Ikeda writes, "The key to the flowering of humanity of which Buddhism speaks is steadfast belief in people's goodness and dedication to cultivating this goodness in oneself and others."

**President Ikeda:** I would like to focus on the Daishonin's identification of the practice of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging as the method of practice for the Latter Day of the Law.

Of course, as we see in "Letter from Sado," the Daishonin also explained to his followers that carrying out the practice of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging is not easy and that one who does so is sure to encounter persecution. Based on this understanding, the Daishonin indicates that Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's practice of bowing in veneration to others while reciting the "24-character Lotus Sutra"<sup>7</sup> is the model for Buddhist practice in the Latter Day. And he says that Never Disparaging's actions constitute the practice of respecting others.

**Morinaka:** The 24-character Lotus Sutra that Bodhisattva Never Disparaging recited is as follows: "I have profound reverence for you, I would never dare treat you with disparagement or arrogance. Why? Because you are all practising the bodhisattva way and are certain to attain Buddhahood" (*LS20*, p.266-67).

**President Ikeda:** In other words, respecting others is the central thought of the Lotus Sutra, and must comprise the core of our Buddhist practice. Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's words of veneration might be called the authority for our efforts to practise shakubuku and share the Mystic Law with others. Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's universal reverence for others indicates that all people, without exception, can attain Buddhahood. Ignorance functions to prevent us from understanding this. In such a deluded state, even if told that all people are endowed with the Buddha nature, the potential for Buddhahood, one cannot believe it.

**Morinaka:** While professing to respect others in an abstract sense, people may often be guilty of unconsciously belittling and disrespecting others in some way.

**President Ikeda:** Such is the fearfulness of the ignorance and delusion lurking deep in people's

lives. And that's why profound conviction and resolute courage are essential. Dauntless courage is vital to our struggle to free one precious person after another from evil and guide them toward good. SGI members summon such courage daily and carry on this struggle in all kinds of situations, including in their activities to conduct shakubuku. That's why they are strong.

As we have noted previously,<sup>8</sup> both "Brahma's entreaty"<sup>9</sup>, when Shakyamuni attained enlightenment and the vow that Nichiren Daishonin made when he proclaimed the establishment of his teaching<sup>10</sup>, were declarations of a resolve never to retreat, no matter how terrible an evil or obstacle might lie ahead. I believe we can interpret this to mean that the determination never to falter in faith is itself the essence of enlightenment.

To lead people to good in a world enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, actively confronting and refuting evil without being contaminated by it, is an enormous challenge. It is like walking along a perilous path atop a towering ridge while struggling to win over various worldly temptations and distractions that would plunge us into the valley of profound disregard and disrespect for other human beings. Having the resolute conviction that we are

"like the lotus flower in the water" (*LS15, p.222*),<sup>11</sup> blooming serenely without being tainted by the mud from which it grows, is indispensable.

The firm conviction to break free of all temptations and distractions that ultimately cause us to disrespect others, is the hallmark of universal enlightenment of the Lotus Sutra.

I emphasize this repeatedly, but there is nothing more deeply rooted than the insidious lures of ignorance. To cite an example from the Lotus Sutra, they are so powerful that even Shariputra, renowned as the foremost in wisdom, was not immune. In the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, Shariputra - as a person of the two vehicles - had been told that he was incapable of attaining Buddhahood [as was also the case for women and evil people]. Nevertheless, in the Lotus Sutra - even after he has himself received a prediction of attaining Buddhahood in the future - Shariputra has a hard time accepting the dragon girl's attainment of Buddhahood in her present form because she is a woman.<sup>12</sup>

**Morinaka:** That example suggests just how difficult it is to live with genuine respect for others.

<sup>7</sup> The 24-character Lotus Sutra: Words that Bodhisattva Never Disparaging recited when conducting his practice of revering others (*LS20, p.266-67*). Written in 24 characters in Kumarajiva's Chinese translation, it is called the 24-character Lotus Sutra because it expresses the teaching of the Lotus Sutra in abbreviated form.

<sup>8</sup> See *Newsletter* No. 5053.

<sup>9</sup> Brahma's entreaty: When Shakyamuni attained enlightenment, at first he thought it would be pointless to try teaching the truth to which he had awakened to others because, unable to comprehend it, they would react negatively. He thought he would simply stay in the blissful world of enlightenment he had attained. But at the urging of the god Brahma, he resolved to expound the Law in order to lead people to enlightenment.

<sup>10</sup> In "The Opening of the Eyes," the Daishonin writes: "If I remain silent, I may escape persecutions in this lifetime, but in my next life I will most certainly fall into the hell of incessant suffering. If I speak out, I am fully aware that I will have to contend with the three obstacles and four devils. But of these two courses, surely the latter is the one to choose. . . . I vowed to summon up a powerful and unconquerable desire for the salvation of all beings and never to falter in my efforts" (*WND, p.239-40*).

<sup>11</sup> A passage from "Emerging from the Earth" (15th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra. The image of the lotus producing pure flowers in a muddy swamp is used to illustrate how the Bodhisattvas of the Earth are unsoiled by earthly desires, karma, and suffering.

<sup>12</sup> The Lotus Sutra says: "At that time Shariputra said to the dragon girl, 'You suppose that in this short time you have been able to attain the unsurpassed way. But this is difficult to believe. Why? Because a woman's body is soiled and defiled, not a vessel for the Law. How could you attain the unsurpassed bodhi [enlightenment]?' " (*LS12, p.188*).

**President Ikeda:** Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon so that we who live in this evil age of the Latter Day can activate our Buddha nature and bring forth the splendid flower of our humanity, our inherent enlightened nature. He bequeathed us the Gohonzon and taught that all people are equally worthy of the highest respect. We of the SGI have put this teaching into practice in our daily lives, and by doing so we have shared with the world the way to deeply respect the lives of all human beings.

How infinitely precious is the immense beneficial power of the Gohonzon! How great is the practice of the Soka Gakkai! We must never forget this.

Our lives take on profound meaning when we advance on the path of respect for all people. Cultivating respect for others is the purpose of our Buddhist practice. By persevering in the practice of venerating others after the manner of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, we can savor a true sense of happiness and purpose.

**Saito:** This refers to our practise of shakubuku, to our various SGI activities, as well as our broader effort to build friendship in society. All are expressions of our respect for others.

**President Ikeda:** The Daishonin writes: “What does Bodhisattva Never Disparaging’s profound respect for people signify? The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being” (*WND*, p.852).

Why did Bodhisattva Never Disparaging persevere in his practice of revering others? The Daishonin says it is because the purpose of Shakyamuni’s appearance in the world lies in his “behavior as a human being.” Put another way, Buddhism exists nowhere apart from our conduct as human beings. This is as indicated by the passage: “The true aspect invariably manifests . . . in the Ten Worlds, and the Ten Worlds invariably manifest in life and its environment” (*WND*, p.383).<sup>13</sup> Unless the Mystic Law is manifest in real living beings and in the lands of the Ten Worlds, it is no more than theory and will be of no value to people. The fundamental purpose of Buddhism is to activate the world of Buddhahood within the behavior, bearing, and actions of real living beings.

**Saito:** The conduct indicated by the phrase “behavior as a human being,” as we have already confirmed, consists of manifesting our Buddhahood and working to cultivate and tap the Buddha nature of all people.

**President Ikeda:** That’s right. The behavior of a Buddhist is characterised by faith in the Buddha nature in ourselves and others, and by efforts to bring forth this Buddha nature. This also forms the basis of the humanism we are promoting.

A New Era of the People: Forging a Global Network of Robust Individuals

by Daisaku Ikeda January 26, 2006

<sup>13</sup> A passage from the Great Teacher Miao-lo’s *The Diamond Scalpel*. He writes: “The true aspect invariably manifests in all phenomena, and all phenomena invariably manifest in the ten factors. The ten factors invariably manifest in the Ten Worlds, and the Ten Worlds invariably manifest in life and its environment” (*WND*, p.383).



## Responding to Worldwide Crises

The year 2005 was a historic one, marking the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II. It was also a year in which a variety of severe threats, each capable of thrusting people's daily lives into crisis, became manifest.

Nowhere was this more shockingly visible than in the series of natural disasters that struck different parts of the world. Before the wounds of the calamitous Sumatra earthquake and tsunami had begun to heal, India was hit in July 2005 by widespread flooding and, at the end of August, hurricanes inflicted enormous damage on the southern Gulf Coast of the United States. Large parts of Western Africa continued to suffer from severe food shortages and famine resulting from drought and locust infestations, and in October a massive earthquake in northern Kashmir left more than 73,000 dead and approximately 3 million people homeless.

The impact of Hurricane Katrina in the United States, the sight of a major American city paralysed by the effects of flooding and its citizens left to fend for themselves in the most appalling conditions, brought into painfully sharp relief the vulnerability of even advanced industrial societies to natural disaster.

Likewise, continued terror attacks throughout the world - attacks which have killed and injured large numbers of innocent civilians - projected a deep insecurity into people's lives throughout 2005. In July, suicide bombings on London's public transport system killed dozens and injured hundreds of people. The shocking impact of these attacks was compounded by the fact that they were perpetrated in the face of heightened security measures in place for the G8 Summit. As part of a disturbing trend, increasingly indiscriminate violence - in Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq and elsewhere - claimed the lives of many ordinary citizens.

In addition, intolerance based on ethnic or national differences, often aggravated by international movements of population, has been the cause of

conflict and criminal violence, and many societies are experiencing severe divisions. In the Darfur region of western Sudan, attacks by the so-called Janjaweed militia against the local population have claimed tens of thousands of lives and displaced some 1.9 million people. Conditions there, which UN investigators have termed "the world's worst humanitarian crisis," [1] have not improved, nor have the underlying causes been resolved.

Hate crimes have increased in the wake of the September 2001 terror attacks, in particular with a growing incidence of violence and discrimination against Muslims. Meanwhile, in October and November of last year, disaffected young people took to the streets as riots broke out throughout France, leading to the imposition of curfews in many cities and towns.

“  
**I**ntolerance  
based on ethnic or national  
differences, often aggravated  
by international movements  
of population, has been the  
cause of conflict and criminal  
violence, and many societies  
are experiencing severe  
divisions  
”

## Spanish Influenza

The influenza pandemic of 1918-19 was the most devastating epidemic in recorded world history, killing somewhere between 20 and 40 million people, more than died in World War I. The name Spanish Flu came from the outbreak in Spain where it killed about 8 million in May 1918. The pandemic, thought to have originated in China, circled the globe, spreading along trade and shipping routes to strike North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Brazil and the South Pacific.

The pandemic infected one-fifth of the world's population and was most deadly for people aged 20 to 40. This pattern of morbidity is unusual for influenza, which is usually a killer of the elderly and young children. The virus had a mortality rate of 2.5 percent, compared to less than 0.1 percent for previous influenza epidemics.

Further, the rapidly advancing pace of globalisation has increased the risk of infectious diseases spreading to epidemic proportion. The ongoing AIDS pandemic continues to strike sub-Saharan Africa particularly hard. Worldwide, AIDS is said to have claimed more than 25 million lives and left behind some 15 million orphans. Currently, approximately 40 million people are infected with the HIV virus that causes AIDS. There are also strong concerns about the emergence of new and virulent forms of influenza. The mutation of animal influenza viruses to permit human-to-human transmission could inflict casualties on the scale of the Spanish Influenza, the great influenza pandemic of 1918-19.

The examples cited above are all representative of global issues that, directly or indirectly, affect us all. In no instance can we afford to regard them as unrelated to us, a fire on the other bank of the river as the Japanese expression has it. And, like global warming and the continued poverty that can serve as a breeding ground for terrorism, these issues are organically linked with the processes of globalisation. They should be seen as its intrinsic products, just as much as the revolutionary changes on the economic, financial and information technology (IT) fronts with which it is

more commonly associated. A holistic response that deals with both the positive and negative aspects of globalisation is urgently required.

These issues go to the very heart of human history and are integral to the effort to create a new global civilization. Given the scale of this challenge, a rushed search for quick results could easily backfire, plunging people into an even deeper state of helplessness and despair. This sense of creeping and unnamable anxiety contrasts starkly with the spirit of hope we would like to associate with the start of a new century. In countering it, we would do well to abide by the admonition, made famous by the environmental movement: Think globally, act locally.

Indeed, perhaps nothing is more effective, when faced with a deadlock of this scale, than to first turn our attention from the macro to the micro--from events of such a vast and overwhelming scale to those that are more immediate and therefore amenable to action. When we translate global issues back into the tangible realities of everyday life, even the most grave and massive among them can be understood in its essence. This approach holds the greatest promise of opening the path to sustainable and productive responses.

An Emergency Hospital for Influenza Patients



<http://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>

## The Free Individual and Unbridled Individualism

Seeking maximum freedom for the individual, modern civilization has focused on cutting people loose from the restrictions and restraints of our various “contexts.” Our gains in material wealth and convenience have been great indeed. But what is the actuality of the “free individual” stripped of all context--the bonds and ties of family and neighborhood; regional, occupational and national communities; religious and other affiliations; and of nature itself? Is this idealized free individual not, in the end, but a fiction? Is the logical outcome of this pursuit of freedom anything other than unbridled individualism, the naked embodiment of unrestrained desire?

We live in an era filled with unpredictable hazards, what the sociologist Ulrich Beck has called the “risk society.” By translating these issues into the dimension of the individual, it is possible to clarify their essence. Unless this is fully understood, we will remain incapable of finding our way out of the overwhelming deadlock of our global realities. Everything comes down to the individual.

If our humanity is found and developed within the context of relations with other people, unbridled individualism is a condition stripped of these connections. The respectful acknowledgment of the existence of others is always predicated on the ability to master and rein in one’s private desires, and this cannot be developed except within the framework of human interaction. There is thus an intolerable vacuity at the heart of such extreme individualism, an instability and insecurity that haunts it and proves the extent to which it is estranged from any normal, healthy way of being. It is ultimately incompatible with our striving to be human.

This reality has not escaped the attention of perceptive observers of society. The writer and former cabinet minister Taichi Sakaiya, for example, has noted the lapsing of traditional bonds, such as those of family relations, locality and the workplace, and

has envisaged a society organized around shared and sympathetic interests. Likewise, the playwright and critic Masakazu Yamazaki portrays the intense feelings of isolation that globalisation can provoke--the sense of existing in an infinite void where “one calls out, but there is no response.” He advocates the development of social relations based on trust and the sharing of the burden of life’s inevitable insecurities. As these commentators reconfirm for us, we can only live within the context of relatedness; it is only there that we can be truly human.

## The Consistent Core and Conviction of the Soka Gakkai

These ideas are of great interest, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the protagonists of any creative restructuring of society will be individual citizens. If indeed we have reached the point where we are threatened, as McKibben says, with “disappearing even as individuals,” then only by reconsidering what it means to be an individual can we find a way forward out of the darkness. It is through the strong will and desire of each of us to actively participate in social relations that society coalesces and can exist as a functional whole.

It is here that the crucial need arises for a framework that will prevent free individuals from descending into unbridled individualism. We must find the fulcrum on which people can develop the strength of will required to be proactive, robust and engaged. Unleashing the vitality of ordinary citizens--one by one--is the only certain way to bring into sight the horizons of a new civilization, a new era of the people. This has been my constant conviction for many decades.

The activities of the SGI constitute a humanistic movement based on Buddhism that seeks to develop robust individuals who can respond to the challenges of our age. Few have described this more incisively

than Dr. Jan Swyngedouw, professor emeritus of Nanzan University, in an interview carried in the *Seikyo Shimbun* in the early 1980s.

From a perspective of more than twenty years of experience with Japanese society and religion, Dr. Swyngedouw expressed his sense of the way in which the Soka Gakkai members differ in their attitudes toward religious faith and practice from those typically held by Japanese people.

The first point he noted was how genuine and deeply held the members' convictions regarding their faith appear to be. Secondly, he commented that the vital religious core of the Soka Gakkai's philosophy functions to awaken people to their inner value as human beings. Dr. Swyngedouw suggested that it is in fostering and forming this kind of "backbone" of character that the Soka Gakkai raises people capable of making a real contribution to world peace.

If the primary mission of religion is to forge robust and engaged individuals capable of creative responses to life's challenges, then now, more than ever, it must rise to this task as the winds of uncertainty and change lash every corner of the world, every aspect of our lives.

**President Ikeda:** It's 1999. We are finally approaching the countdown to the twenty-first century. This is your age. The future rests in your hands. I hope you will make the twenty-first century truly wonderful. Please make it a century in which the life of each individual is cherished and respected to the utmost.

A century without discrimination, without bullying, war or murder.

A century in which no child cries with hunger, in which no mothers or children take their own lives in despair.

A century without environmental destruction.

A century free of academic elitism, greed and materialism.

A century in which human rights are upheld as the most precious treasure.

A century of true democracy, in which the people hold corrupt political leaders to account.

A century in which the people exercise sound judgment and pay no heed to the lies of the mass media.

I hope you will make it a century in which each of your precious dreams comes true and your unique individuality blossoms to the fullest.

To realize these goals, it is vital that each of you achieve victory, that each of you grow into people of philosophy and compassion, into people who possess both real ability and the sincerity to understand the hearts of others. Your victory will be the victory of the twenty-first century. You are our only hope.

## Possessing a Correct View of Life and Death

**Yumitani:** We'll do our best to create a century of life.

**President Ikeda:** Everyone has a mission. That is why we are born. That is why, no matter what happens, we must press on in life through all things. The Japanese word for *mission* means to “use one’s life.” For what purpose do we use our life? For what purpose have we been born in this world, sent from the universe? Why have we been dispatched here?

Buddhism views the universe as one giant living entity. If we compare it to a vast ocean, each individual life is like a wave on that ocean. When the wave rises from the ocean’s surface, that is life; when it merges back into the ocean, that is death. Life and death are one with the universe. In the birth of a single life, the whole universe approves and cooperates. All of you have been sent here with the blessings and congratulations of the entire universe.

All life is equally precious; we cannot apply a hierarchy of value to life, making one living thing more worthy than another. Each life is unique and individual. Every person’s life is as valuable as the universe; it is one with the life of the universe and just as important. Nichiren Daishonin declares, “Life is the foremost of all treasures” [*WND*, p.1125 (*MW-1*, p.267)].<sup>14</sup> He also states, “The Buddha says that life is something that cannot be purchased even for the price of an

entire major world system” [*WND*, p.983 (*MW-7*, p.176)], and “One day of life is more valuable than all the treasures of the major world system” [*WND*, p.955 (*MW-1*, p.231)].

That is why we mustn’t take our own lives. It is why we mustn’t resort to violence; why we mustn’t hurt or bully others. No one has the right to harm the precious treasure that is life.

**Yumitani:** One student writes that when he was a victim of bullying, he questioned why he had to be born into such a painful world, and why he had been born at all.

**President Ikeda:** “Why have we been born?”—youth is the time to search for the answer to this question. Youth is our “second birth.” Our first is our physical birth, but it is during our youth that we are truly born as a person. That’s why it is such a difficult period in life, why we have to go through so much. It is a struggle, like the struggle of a chick trying to break out of its egg. The crucial thing is never to give up. As you struggle to find your way, please pray, think, study, talk with your friends, and give your all to taking care of what’s important now. If you challenge yourself without throwing in the towel, then your very own mission—the one that only you can fulfill—will reveal itself without fail.

<sup>14</sup> Editor’s Note: All Goshō quotations are from the newly published translation *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* (abbreviated as *WND*) (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 1999), unless otherwise stated. The number indicates the relevant page number. The corresponding volume and page number for the quote in the most recent editions of *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* are indicated in brackets.

Note: Yumitani is SGI Japan, YWD Advisor.

## *From 2006 Peace Proposal*

- (1) When we translate global issues back into the tangible realities of everyday life, even the most grave and massive among them can be understood in its essence.
- (2) Unleashing the vitality of ordinary citizens – one by one – is the only way to bring into sight the horizons of a new civilization, a new era of the people.
- (3) If the primary mission of religion is to forge robust and engaged individuals capable of creative responses to life's challenges, then now, more than ever, it must rise to this task as the winds of uncertainty and change lash every corner of the world, every aspect of our lives

*Note: Indigo apologises that in October 2006 Issue, on page 31 (Excerpts from The World of Nichiren Daishonin's Writings, vol.1, #6), the following passage was missing.*

There is no way that the Daishonin intended this ideal for Japan alone. Achieving world peace and bringing happiness to all humanity is the purpose of our Buddhist movement. Humankind now stands at an important cross roads. Will we descend into a world of violence and fear? Or will we construct a world of peace and security?

We must overcome war - the interminable karmic disease of humankind - and actualise the principle of 'establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land' on a global scale. That can only be realised through each individual effecting a change in the very core of their life. "A great human revolution in just a single individual can contribute to a change in the destiny of all humankind." We are standing at the very forefront of this magnificent revolution.

## STUDY PARTNER EXERCISES

*How has your attitude changed towards destructive global events that are occurring in the world today, since practising ND Buddhism?*

*What do you believe is possible through expressing our faith in the dialogue movement of SGIA?*

*How does this activity impact on your day-to-day life?*

*Identity such as: race/gender are expedient identities. What qualities are you developing that would identify you as a global citizen?*