

People of Culture and Wisdom
Building an Oasis of Hope, Trust and Friendship in Society
SGI-USA Culture Department

Selected Encouragement to the Legal Division
from SGI President Daisaku Ikeda



[Picture from Tricycle Magazine: The Buddhist Review](#)

Contents

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra	2
Race Discrimination in America Demonstrates the Limitations of Secular Law	2
Lawyers as Activists – Nelson Mandela’s Struggle	5
Dialogue: A True Alternative to Litigation to Resolve Disputes	6
Dependent Origination: The Basis for an Empathetic System for Resolving Disputes	8
Cicero, a Lawyer Using Words to Fight Injustice	10
Hold High the Banner of Humanism	14

ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE LEGAL DIVISION

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra

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.*



Racial Discrimination, Chicago 1960, The New Human Revolution I, p. 147

“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.”



Rosa Parks, 1955

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), 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.

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.)

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 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 lioness 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.



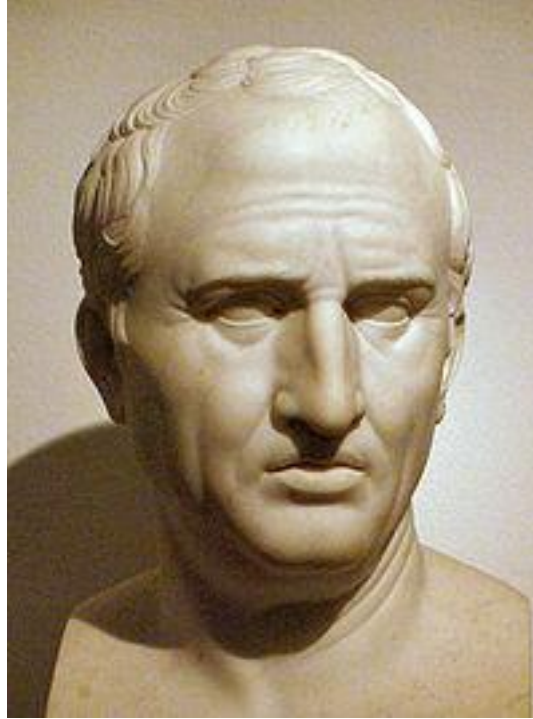
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The teachings of Nichiren Buddhism include the passage: “Without life, environment cannot exist...” In other words, Buddhism regards life and its environment as two integral aspects of the same entity. The subjective world of the self and the objective 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

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.

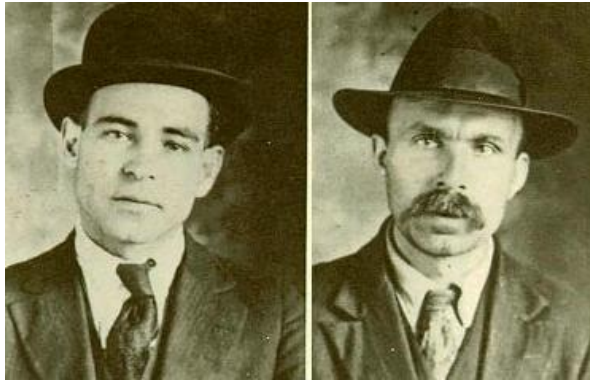
What then is the Soka Gakkai's purpose? Kosen-rufu and world peace! It is increasing the number of Bodhisattvas of the Earth. This is the task Nichiren Daishonin has entrusted to us, which is why those who work for kosen-rufu are noble beyond measure. The foundation of working for kosen-rufu is the spirit 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.