

THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAYS BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA 'A PATH AT WINDSOR'

I had paid a visit to Windsor Castle, famous these days as the weekend abode of Queen Elizabeth. It stands about twenty-two miles west of London. It is in this castle that the traditional rites and ceremonies of the English royal house are conducted. My wife and I had been honored with an invitation to one such ceremony at which the Queen would be present. Unfortunately, our schedule prevented us from attending.

Grateful for the consideration shown us, however, we felt we must at least pay a visit, and that day we set out for Windsor Castle.

We had just had lunch at a restaurant on the bank of the Thames with the Marquis of Reading, who had been so instrumental in assisting us with the "Robes of the Realm" Exhibition at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum. (Fully titled "Robes of the Realm—An Exhibition of 300 years of British Ceremonial Dress, it opened in October, 1989.) After bidding the Marquis farewell, we took a stroll along the banks of the Thames.

The English philosopher-poet Thomas Gray affectionately called this river, of which he cherished fond memories from his youth, "Father Thames," and described it as a venerable old soul.

Walking a while, we came upon Windsor Bridge. Across it stands Eton College, the prestigious boy's school that Thomas Gray attended. It is a school with a tradition of humanistic education, noted for its teaching of English gentlemanship. As we stood by the river's edge, a group of swans swam up to us. We tossed them some food, and heard a sudden fluttering overhead. Looking up into the blue early summer sky, we saw some pigeons taking wing.

*Though the eye cannot
discern them, there are
paths in the sky.
Birds have their path,
as does the wind,
The stars, too,
have a path to follow,
as do the rivers, the oceans,
and the fish that
swim in them.
People, too, have a human
path to follow.*

Windsor Castle was built atop a hill overlooking the Thames. It is a dignified old castle of Norman architecture. It had its origin as a fortress built some 900 years ago. Standing on the stone path leading into Royal Town (another name for Windsor Castle) one can see a long road stretching into the distance. It runs as a single strand through green fields interwoven with lawns and plane-trees. This three-mile path is known as the Long Walk. On the road far off I could discern a few small human forms — perhaps a family out for a walk. Enticed by the distant sky, I raised my camera and snapped the shutter two or three times.

A single road, stretching limitlessly. If we follow that single road, that single path, it will

Title: A Path At Windsor

Subject: World Tribune 07/23/99 n.3252 p.8 WT990723p08 Windsor Castle, United Kingdom

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Keywords: Castle Daisaku Essays Ikeda Kingdom Path Photo President Tribune United Windsor World

link us to the land. And beyond the broad expanse of the land, it will link us to the world as well. If we never stop walking ahead step by step along the correct path in life, then the boundless expanse of a world of hope surely will open before us.

There is also the path of fame; the path of power. But continuing along these paths, one's own destruction awaits in the distance.

We follow an unadorned path. But it is also an unsurpassed path, a path that glows with the light of sublime mission and deep fulfillment.

About 15 minutes to the west by car from Windsor is Taplow Court. It is the "Treasure Castle of Peace and Culture" of SGI of the United Kingdom. Once a center for high society, this manor has received as guests many members of the Royal Family.

I heard there was even once a saying that went, if you hire a horse at Windsor, it will quite naturally turn toward Taplow. Two days before my visit to Windsor, at a meeting I attended at Taplow, my young friends sang powerfully a song they had written called "The Path":

*Freedom! Break the chains
Lift up your hearts, now
you're living again
Now is the time to break the
chains
It feels so good to be giving
again
Ever more free from fear,
Walking in the path.*

There are those who build a path, and those who tear it down. There are those who continue to walk a path, and those who stray from it. I wish to be a person who forges a path; a person who persists in walking a path.

No matter what; until the end, I will keep walking, keep running. Even if I should fall along the way, and return to the dust of the land, because I believe in the youth who will succeed me along this path, I will have not a single regret.

Four in a series