

## **'SOKA GAKKAI IN AMERICA' AUTHORS TO SIGN BOOKS**

The U.S. launching of *Soka Gakkai in America*, the book based upon the first in-depth sociological study of SGI Buddhists in this country, will take place July 10, at 1:30 p.m., at the Los Angeles Friendship Center. All members and their guests are invited. Co-authors Phillip E. Hammond, the D. Mackenzie Brown Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and David W. Machacek, who also teaches at the school, will summarize their findings during a 30-minute presentation, and then sign copies of the book and answer questions.

This 224-page volume is based on the hundreds of responses SGI-USA members gave to questionnaires in 1997, plus personal interviews with members and staff at the national headquarters.

The publisher, Oxford University Press, describes the scholarly work: "This is the first-ever in-depth study of the Soka Gakkai Buddhists in the United States of America. Drawing on new and revealing surveys and interviews, it paints a fascinating picture of one of the fastest-growing religions in the world."

In the words of the authors, "Even those readers already familiar with the Soka Gakkai should learn something new from this study. SGI-USA members will be interested to learn that while we locate their religion at the boundary of religious culture in America, it is the boundary looking ahead to the future, not back to the past. Put another way, SGI is close enough to the cultural center to be a reasonable alternative to the mainstream American religions but distinctive enough to make a singular contribution to the American religious market."

This book is recommended as an important and objective reference for everyone interested in the practice and development of the SGI movement in the United States. Arrangements with the publisher have allowed SGI-USA bookstores to offer the hardcover edition at \$32, a substantial discount from the \$45 list price at which it is being sold by commercial outlets. Copies will be available for purchase at the event. Those who may have bought the book beforehand can also bring it along for signing by the authors.

An in-depth interview with the authors will appear in an up-coming issue of the *World Tribune*.

— AL ALBERGATE