

## **SGI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ON THE EXHIBITION'S OPENING THE 21ST CENTURY MUST BE A CENTURY OF LIFE**

Dr. Adrienne Noe and the other distinguished representatives of the National Museum of Health and Medicine; Dr. Linus Pauling, Jr., and all the members of the Pauling Family; Dr. Orcillia Forbes; Dr. Bruce Albert; Dr. Mary Good; Dr. Rita Colwell; distinguished members of the Advisory Committee; Ladies and Gentlemen; Friends:

It is a great pleasure to be able to celebrate with you the opening of the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States of America.

It was my honor to have known Dr. Pauling in the last years of his life, as we engaged in a dialogue that was eventually issued in published form. During the course of our meetings, I was struck by the sense that each word and phrase spoken by Dr. Pauling resonated with a powerful significance for the future. As we shared our visions of the future, we found that we agreed fully on this point: that the 21st century must be a century of life, defined as one in which greater attention will be paid to human beings and their happiness and health.

Human health and happiness were indeed the noble values to which Pauling dedicated his life. This is reflected not only in his important scientific and medical contributions, but also in his relentless efforts for peace, for the banning of nuclear tests and the abolition of nuclear weapons. These commitments were the natural outgrowth of Dr. Pauling's dedication to the cause of health—the health of all humankind, the health of our planet.

In this sense, it is hard to imagine a more fitting site for this exhibition than the National Museum of Health and Medicine. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt respect and appreciation to Dr. Adrienne Noe, Director of the Museum, and all those who have supported the realization of this exhibition at this venue.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being." This comprehensive understanding of health actually relates importantly to the original inspiration of Buddhism. Buddhism grew, as a philosophical system, from the fundamental question of how humans can, in their physical, spiritual, and social dimensions, confront and overcome suffering—the sufferings of living, of aging, of illness, and finally of death and dying. It was thus quite natural that Dr. Pauling, as a great scientist, and myself, as a Buddhist, should concur on the overarching importance of protecting and enhancing the health of humankind and of Earth. When Dr. Pauling acted as a commentator for a lecture I once gave at Claremont McKenna College in Southern California, he expressed his strong sympathy for the Buddhist ideal of the Bodhisattva; that is, an altruistic way of life dedicated to the happiness and welfare of others.

From the Buddhist perspective, health is certainly more than the mere absence of disease or infirmity. Rather, health indicates the capacity, even while struggling against illness or other burdens, to continue to meet those challenges and to live creatively throughout the course of one's life. This kind of creative way of life, transcending sufferings and hindrances, is essential to a life of genuine health.

In this sense the example of Dr. Pauling and Mrs. Ava Helen Pauling offers a testament to a life of authentic health, more eloquent than any scientific theory. For they were able to turn harassment and persecution into the impetus for advancement, as they brought their

extraordinary resources of wisdom and courage to bear on the quest for human health and happiness.

It is my conviction that to learn from the life of Dr. Pauling, and to share it with others, is for all of us, and in particular for young people, the highest form of humanistic peace education. It was this conviction that inspired me in first proposing the holding of this exhibition to Dr. Pauling.

The reception of this exhibition at its previous venues in San Francisco and Los Angeles was extremely encouraging, evidencing the extent to which the citizens of those cities responded to its core message.

Truly, it gives me great pleasure to imagine the joy with which Dr. Pauling would have greeted the sight of his values being conveyed from America to the world, from the present into the future. In my mind's eye, I picture his warm smile, the rosy tint of his cheeks, lit by the flame of inquiry and seeking for truth, which burned brightly in him to the very last.

I would like to close by offering my pledge to continue working for the realization of the ideals to which Dr. Pauling dedicated his life, and by extending my best wishes for the well-being of all our friends in attendance and for the further flourishing of the individuals and institutions who have provided their support to this exhibition.

*Daisaku Ikeda, President,  
Soka Gakkai International  
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