

NEW TOOLS FOR VOV 2000 BY YOUTH PEACE COMMITTEE

Since August 1999, SGI-USA youth division members have been engaged in the Victory over Violence campaign, a nationwide grassroots action campaign to spread awareness of nonviolence and shed light on the widespread violence among youth from a Buddhist perspective. The campaign to date has resulted in more than 3,000 small VOV discussion meetings, more than 20 other VOV seminars, festivals and anti-violence summits spearheaded by youth across the country and 100,000 signed VOV nonviolence pledges.

The response to VOV has been exceptionally positive. Requests for VOV packets, videos, bookmarks, buttons and pledges have come from as far away as Turkey, Japan, France and other countries. In addition, many youth have voiced a strong interest in continuing the campaign as a means of furthering their ability to oppose the seemingly endless barrage of physical and passive violence perpetrated by youth and bring hope to their friends.

Due to this overwhelming response, the SGI-USA youth will continue to carry out Victory Over Violence activities throughout 2000. In support of VOV 2000 activities, the SGI-USA Youth Peace Committee has produced new tools to help facilitate the next wave of VOV activities. These include a VOV exhibit, VOV philosophy pamphlet and VOV Web site.

VOV Exhibit

The four-panel traveling VOV exhibit can be reserved by any SGI-USA region or area. In beautiful photomural graphic illustrations, the exhibit depicts the violence of the 20th century — a Century of War, in which an estimated 180 million people died from war and oppression. It also inspires hope that the 21st century will be a Century of Life through the examples and inspiring words of many great nonviolent activists like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and SGI President Ikeda.

VOV Philosophy Pamphlet

The philosophy pamphlet was created to answer the question “If passive violence fuels the fire of physical violence, then what causes passive violence from a Buddhist perspective?” The pamphlet will help youth in acquiring a deeper understanding of the origin of racism and discrimination as well as how to overcome the state of anger that causes many youth today to seek their identity in their race, language or other cultural identifiers. As a quote in the philosophy from President Ikeda points out, “a philosophical and ideological vacuum drives people to seek their identity in their race. They cannot bear the void in thought, so they look elsewhere.”

The philosophy also encourages youth to carry out their own human revolution and “become the change they wish to see” in society. “Your future depends on the efforts you make and whether you are walking the correct path. It’s not important how you compare to others but how you compare to who you were yesterday. If you see that you’ve advanced even one step, then you’ve achieved a victory,” reads another quote from the SGI president.

VOV Web site

The Web site at vov.com contains information on the VOV campaign including the “Quest for Peace” workbook exercises, violence statistics and resources, a place to sign the peace pledge on-line, an event page and also a place to make suggestions for future VOV activities.

If you want to reserve the exhibit or utilize the VOV philosophy, please contact the YPC via the vov.com Web site.