

## RESTORING HUMAN WHOLENESS

*The following is excerpted from a speech delivered by SGI President Ikeda at Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, Calif., Jan. 29, 1993. It can be found in the book A New Humanism, pp. 175–76.*

One of the central teachings of Buddhist philosophy bears directly on the question of character formation. Buddhism classifies the states of life that constitute human experience into ten worlds or realms....

Within each of these ten states or worlds is likewise to be found the full spectrum of the ten worlds. In other words, the state of hell contains within it every state from hell to Buddhahood. In the Buddhist view, life is never static, but is in constant flux, effecting a dynamic, moment-by-moment transformation among the states. The most critical point, then, is which of these ten states, as they exist in the vibrant flow of life, forms the basis for our own lives? Buddhism offers a way of life centered on the highest states, those of Bodhisattva and Buddhahood, as an ideal of human existence. Emotions—joy and sorrow, pleasure and anger—are of course the threads from which life's fabric is woven, and we continue to experience the full span of the ten worlds. These experiences, however, can be shaped and directed by the pure and indestructible states of Bodhisattva and Buddhahood. Nichiren, whose Buddhist teaching is the base of our organization, did more than merely preach this doctrine; he lived it, providing a remarkable model for the future. When, for example, he was about to be executed by the iniquitous authorities of the time, he reproached his lamenting disciples, saying, "What greater joy could there be?" After overcoming the greatest trial of his life, he even had saké brought for the soldiers who had been escorting him to his execution.

Because of these qualities, I am confident that Buddhism can deeply affect the formation of character, which is the key to the restoration of human wholeness. As a practitioner of Buddhism, it is my hope that together with our distinguished friends gathered here today, we will set off on a courageous journey in search of those new principles of integration that will determine the fate of humankind in the coming century. I would like to close by quoting a passage from a poem [*Leaves of Grass*] by Walt Whitman, whose poetry I have read and loved since my youth.

*I see male and female everywhere,  
I see the serene brotherhood of philosophs,  
I see the constructiveness of my race,  
I see the results of the perseverance and industry of my race,  
I see ranks, colors, barbarisms, civilizations, I go among them, I mix indiscriminately,  
And I salute all the inhabitants of the earth.*