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and Intergenerational
Creativity

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SAVE THE DATE!

September 30, 2006
3rd Annual Ikeda
Forum for
Intercultural Dialogue
See page 2 for details.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Lecture on Global Vision

The Eleanor Roosevelt Lecture on Global Vision, cosponsored by the BRC and the Wellesley Centers for Women, was the fifth and final event in the Women of Courage Lecture Series. Shulamith Koenig, a self-described "human rights fanatic," gave the audience of over 125 people a lot to think about with her rousing talk entitled "In Our Hands: Human Rights Is a Way of Life" in which she acknowledged Eleanor Roosevelt as "my guiding light."

But first, "a very special guest" was introduced: First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, ably portrayed by actress Elena Dodd dressed in a vintage suit, fox fur stole, and feathered hat. To the audience, it seemed that Eleanor Roosevelt had come back to life to explain her role as the astute chair of the UN Commission.

To her surprise, President Harry Truman invited her to join the UN Delegation on Human Rights. Before she knew it, she was en route to London as a member of Committee 3, the group charged with humanitarian, educational, and cultural questions.

From these beginnings, Eleanor Roosevelt was invited to create a UN Human Rights Commission in 1946. Working in Geneva with representatives of many nations, it took 85 meetings to reach a draft of the Universal Declaration that everyone could accept. In particular, Mrs. Roosevelt was

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Elise Boulding, Susan Bailey, Virginia Benson, and Shulamith Koenig enjoy a few moments before the lecture.

MENTOR AND DISCIPLE: The Globalization of an Ancient Idea

Richard Seager is Associate Professor of Religion at Hamilton College and author of *Encountering the Dharma: Daisaku Ikeda, Soka Gakkai, and the Globalization of Buddhist Humanism* (University of California Press, 2006). Based on his East/West understanding of intergenerational creativity, he highlights one of the themes of his book below as he explains how mentor-disciple relationships operate within the Soka Gakkai, a lay Japanese Buddhist organization based on the teachings of Nichiren. For an author interview with Dr. Seager, please go to www.brc21.org/books_booktalk.html.

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Recently, I attended a talk by Jane Goodall at the Franklin Park Zoo, celebrating Earth Day. Under a tent on that overcast day, she reminded the crowd in simple heartfelt words that we stand on a precipice, that the earth is dying. She told real tales of beauty, awe, and suffering among animals in disappearing habitats and then she turned to the children. She said that everywhere she goes, she has been speaking with young people. She found sadness. They are depressed about the state of their world-to-be. And they are angry, she said, angry with her generation for bequeathing all these terrible problems to them. Goodall's response was to create a community service program for young people called Roots and Shoots. Full of creative energy, this group is inspired by a vision of the persistent invisible growth of roots and the fresh life force of shoots, which together can undermine the thickest walls.

Jane Goodall's initiative, now flourishing among young people around the world, is just one example of intergenerational conversations that can give rise to powerful alliances for positive change. This newsletter with its theme of "Living Legacies and Intergenerational Creativity" shares Goodall's impulse. I hope something in it strikes a chord with you.

BRC's upcoming Ikeda Forum for Intercultural Dialogue (announced below) is inspired by a New England living legacy, the expansive life philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson. We aim to provide a public space for empowering private imaginations—young and not-so-young—and setting them loose on the awesome challenge of imagining a great future for our country, a future much different from today. In his essay, "Politics," Emerson writes prophetically, "We live in a very low state of the world, and pay unwilling tribute to governments founded on force." Can we, as "the sage of Concord" dared, imagine something that's never been tried—a country built on love and trust?

If this seems wildly optimistic to you, maybe the words of our co-convenor, Sarah Wider, President of the Emerson Society, will help. "If we want to make imagination feel at home, generosity shows us the way. How else can imagination thrive but in the place where welcoming comes first and where judgment feels no need to speak and finally feels no need to be? ... When Emerson talks about generosity, he connects it with a large understanding. If we are generous, we see well beyond ourselves and our individual limitations. We are generous of 'sentiment,' of 'mind,' of 'affection,' of 'intellect,' of 'sympathy.' It may well be the primary catalyst for the imagination."

Join us, generous souls, as we entertain the imagination at the BRC this September.

Virginia Benson, Executive Director

**THE IKEDA FORUM
FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

**Emerson and the
Power of Imagination**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Ralph Waldo Emerson once observed that imagination is not the talent of a gifted few, but the health of a whole society. Yet daily we see evidence of failed imagination — in our classrooms, in our political leaders, in the violence that endangers our world. Now more than ever, we need our imaginers. Join us as we explore the power of a healthy imagination in helping to create the world we long for.



Ralph Waldo Emerson's Legacy: The Power of Imagination

*"If you touch the imagination,
you serve them."*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

During his lifetime, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) addressed thousands of people through his sermons, lectures, essays, and poems. Beginning his speaking career as a Unitarian minister, he left the ministry in the 1830s but continued his commitment to the life of the imagination as a lecturer and writer. His first book, a slim volume titled *Nature* appeared in 1836. It launched a revolution of thought that continued in several volumes of essays and in two volumes of poems.

His audiences have been many and varied. They remain so to this day, including painters, teachers, novelists, architects, musicians, educational reformers, poets, peace activists, and philosophers. Over the years, many well-known thinkers have been inspired by Emerson, including Elizabeth Peabody, Sarah Freeman Clarke, John Dewey, Lucy Maud Montgomery, Louisa May Alcott, Charles Ives, Frank Lloyd Wright, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, W.E.B. DuBois, Marsden Hartley, Friedrich Nietzsche, Lucia Ames Meade, Josei Toda, Daisaku Ikeda, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

During a time that might well remind us of our own, Emerson criticized the soulless, property-driven society that privileged money and fame over imagination and friendship. For Emerson, the latter were the true "properties" of human life, the elements within which all life could properly thrive. In his view, the imagination



was our homeland, a place without borders or boundaries, where no one was excluded and each could do his or her own creative and imaginative work. As he commented in an essay entitled "Beauty," "There are no days so memorable as those which vibrated to some stroke of the imagination."

Loosening the stranglehold of mechanization, Emerson offered a markedly different reality. He proposed that creation was not over and done with. Instead, the world was a work in progress, not because it needed improvement or redemption, but simply because the very nature of existence was dynamic. In Emerson's thinking, we live in a world rich with process, where one thing is always becoming another. Little wonder that when translations from Hindu, Confucian, and Islamic writings became available in New England, he was fascinated, encouraged, and heartened. Here was yet further evidence of the profound relation connecting all thought, all individuals, all Nature, even as the bumpiness and busyness of individual days often prevents us from experiencing the interconnectedness that is, literally, only a thought away.

Again and again, Emerson reminded listeners and readers alike that "the one thing in the world of value is the active soul." He assured his audiences that this soul was "not the privilege of here and there a favorite, but the sound estate" of every person. The question remained: did individuals turn greedy claiming that estate as their own or did they understand the larger nature of that active soul? Throwing down a challenge to his nineteenth-century readers, a challenge that no generation has yet met, he comments that there are higher rights than those currently recognized by American democracy: "A man has a right to be employed, to be trusted, to be loved, to be revered."

In the dominant cultures of the contemporary world, those rights have yet to be honored. We are far from that State which Emerson asks us to imagine. In 1841, he wrote, "The power of love, as the basis of a 'State,' has never been tried." Martin Luther King, Jr., called upon the world to imagine that State during the Civil Rights Movement. As Emerson tells us, "Thoughts rule the world." Every day we forcefully see that reality, both in the rare places where love flourishes and heartbreakingly—and all too commonly—where hatred seeds the violence we have come to know all too well. Emerson reminds us we can make other choices. We are the active soul. Returning to Emerson's words and reading them with the imagination they invite, we are moved to do more than lament the situations we can change.

*Sarah Ann Wider
Colgate University*



“Every Human being knows when injustice is present.”

SHULAMITH KOENIG

The Eleanor Roosevelt Lecture on Global Vision

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proud of achieving gender-free language: “all human beings” instead of “all men.” On December 10, 1948, the document was adopted by 48 out of 58 nations with no dissenting votes (some abstaining). Mrs. Roosevelt’s term on the UN Human Rights Commission ended in 1952.

Susan Bailey, executive director of the Wellesley Centers for Women introduced the speaker. As founder and executive director of the People’s Movement for Human Rights Learning, Shulamith Koenig has conducted consultations with educators and community leaders in more than 60 countries. Recipient of the United Nations Human Rights Award in 2003, she was a driving force behind the campaign that sparked the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, and she helped to establish ten expressly-designated human rights cities worldwide.

“Shula needs to be better known because the world needs women role models,” said Bailey. “One half of humanity cannot make the changes they don’t see or feel the need to make.”

Speaking passionately about the need for a broader understanding of the many dimensions of human rights, Shulamith Koenig asked a fundamental question: “How do we bring the message to the world that human rights is a way of life?” In her holistic view, the matter of human rights is a matter of development, of social justice, of security, of economics. “Human rights is the right to be human,” she said.

Koenig spoke of her youth in Israel. “I grew up in a socialist country,” she explained, “and my father, an X-Ray technician, was a feminist.” Although she became an officer in the Israeli Army, Koenig was never taught to

hate Arabs. Remembering her father’s particular interpretation of “Jews as a chosen people,” she smiled. “He always said ‘Yes, you are chosen for responsibility.’”

As she spoke, her deep commitment to human rights was clear. Regarding armed conflict, she said, “Morality is more important than nationality.” On the role of women in modern society, she said, “Patriarchy cannot exist unless women agree to it.” Like Nelson Mandela, she devotes her energies to the vision he has articulated: “Let us create a new political culture based on human rights.”

She often returned to her fundamental question: “How do we spread the word about human rights to make them a reality? How do we make human rights a way of life?” According to Koenig, human rights encompasses ALL rights. While political and civil rights may provide the structure, we must also include cultural, social, and economic rights in our definition of human rights. This concept, she explained, is built into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. “This is a miracle that’s happened since 1948. We can learn from this, not from a point of view of violation but from a point of view of realization that shows us what we need to do for every human being in the world to make human rights a way of life.”

She spoke with particular passion about the condition of women, noting that patriarchy remains “the law of the land,” meaning every land worldwide. “We are the forgotten half of the world,” she said.



Over 125 people attended the Women of Courage lecture by Shulamith Koenig.

In this context, she spoke of the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW in short) and described it as “...the only document in the world that recognizes women as full human beings.” Elaborating, she explained that patriarchy is a system “where injustice is presented as justice” and must be addressed as a system, not by pointing fingers at individual men. “[As women] we exchange our equality for survival.” Defining herself as “an absolutist... a fundamentalist” she declared that “Patriarchy is the basis for all the ailments of the world, for everything.” In Koenig’s view, the differences that all people are aware of from a very early age are gender-related. Regardless of what the culture is, there are divisions along gender lines. And in most places, from Africa to the United States and throughout the world, Koenig has observed that “from the beginning, being a woman is an inferior thing to be.” But there is, she suggests, an advantage in this:

“This allows us to understand the inferiority of others, the ongoing vicious cycle of humiliation that we must break through.”

She urged those present not to shy away from accurate language in their approach to human rights: “Human rights is a political ideology. Don’t get scared of the word ideology; many people are really angry with me when I do that. But human rights is a political ideology. What is an ideology? An ideology is the way we want to be in the world, correct? The way we want to be in the world in community, in dignity.”

She also emphasized the importance of being aware of how the “ideology” of human rights applies to daily realities: “Thirteen thousand people a day die of hunger in the world; four times the number of people who died on September 11th. Every day of the week, of the year, of the month. Where we have to go with that is to really understand that we are looking for a ‘framework’ to

respond to such realities. We speak about these things in churches; we speak about them at Harvard University; we speak about them everywhere, but nobody knows that the framework is already there and that it’s called human rights.”

In closing, she spoke of her current project to develop “Human Rights Cities” throughout the world, noting that none exists in America at this time. She also invited the audience to join her in this effort, or create their own project together.

For further information on Shulamith Koenig’s work, including her vision for Human Rights Cities, please go to www.pdubre.org. To read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, go to www.un.org/rights/50/decla.htm. An in-depth summary of Koenig’s lecture is available at www.brc21.org/er_woc_summary.html.

*Helen Marie Casey
and Patti Marxsen*

THE WISDOM OF YOUTH



Rabindranath Tagore A YOUNG POET'S VISION

WHEN RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861-1941) was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for a volume of poems called *Gitanjali* (Song Offerings), he was the first Asian to win the coveted prize. Born in 1861 into one of the leading families of the Bengal Renaissance, young Rabi, the youngest of fourteen children, grew up in a family atmosphere that welcomed new cultural influences and rejected barriers, both sectarian and social.

Tagore credits several illuminating experiences from his youth with shaping his life and establishing its creative direction. When he was learning to read at about the age of six, disconnected words suddenly came together as he encountered the

rhyming phrase “*jal pary/pata narey*” (the water falls/the leaf trembles) in his spelling book. The rhythm of the words connected him for the first time with a harmonious creative dimension. “I was no longer a mere student with his mind muffled by spelling lessons,” he writes. “The rhythmic picture of the tremulous leaves beaten by the rain opened before my mind the world which does not merely carry information, but a harmony with my being. The unmeaning fragments lost their individual isolation and my mind revelled in the unity of a vision.”

An even more intense experience occurred at age 18 as he stood on a balcony in Calcutta watching an early morning sunrise. It was a heightened moment, he wrote, as though a mist had lifted and “the invisible screen of the commonplace was removed from all things and all men, and their

The Wisdom of Youth

Youth is, after all, just a moment, but it is the moment, the spark that you always carry in your heart.

—RAISA M. GORBACHEV

Albert Schweitzer: THE POWER OF YOUTHFUL IDEALISM

ALBERT SCHWEITZER (1875-1965) emerged on the world stage as the Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1952; the kindly doctor who ran a hospital somewhere in Africa; or the compassionate, wrinkled face on the cover of LIFE Magazine (1956). These images fix his persona in our cultural memory as an elder. But long before he had white hair, Schweitzer was a gifted young man facing a difficult decision.

As the son of a Protestant minister in the French-German region of Alsace, Schweitzer's early life was shaped by Christian theology and European culture. As a boy, he demonstrated talent for music and possessed an innate sensitivity: “As far back as I

can remember, I was saddened by the amount of misery I saw in the world around me.” He attended an elite Gymnasium and, at age 18, enjoyed his first trip to Paris to study the organ. At the University of Strasbourg, he gravitated toward philosophy, theology, and music theory. “I was always, even as a boy, engrossed in the philosophical problem of the relation between emotion and reason,” he said. Surely he would become a pastor, a professor, or a musician.

Instead, Albert Schweitzer decided “to make my life my argument” by surprising everyone he knew with a different choice. In 1905, a week before his thirtieth birthday, he laid out his view of missionary work in a sermon. He explained that “...missionary work in itself is not primarily a religious matter.” Rather, he saw it as a humanitarian responsibility,



© Schweitzer Archives, Gunsbach

Age does not always inform youth. Sometimes youthful experience and instincts guide lives of great purpose. Two twentieth-century examples include Nobel Laureates Rabindranath Tagore and Albert Schweitzer, whose youthful turning points remain part of their lasting legacies.

ultimate significance was intensified in my mind... That which was memorable in this experience was its human message, the sudden expansion of my consciousness in the super-personal world of man." This experience was followed by an unprecedented outpouring of creative energy that affected him throughout his life and which, according to his self-narrative, provided the experiential base for his concept of a unity that penetrates all existence. As he noted to biographer C.F. Andrews: "That morning in Free School Lane was one of the first things that gave me the inner vision, and I have tried to explain it in my poems. I have felt, ever since, that this was my goal: to express the fullness of life, in its beauty, as perfection—if only the veil were withdrawn."

Tagore's creative output seems an almost impossible feat. He composed

his first poem at age eight and, by the end of his life, had written more than 25 volumes of poetry, 15 plays, 90 short stories, 11 novels, 13 volumes of essays, and had founded and edited numerous journals. He created an educational centre at Santiniketan (The Abode of Peace), prepared Bengali textbooks, composed more than 2,000 songs (including two that would become the national anthems of India and Bangladesh), as well as creating over 2,000 paintings. Besides his educational and literary work, he was an actor, singer, director-producer, religious commentator, cultural ambassador, and initiator of rural development projects. It is noteworthy that his creative output during the last years of life was not only prolific, but also innovative in new directions. From his creative spirit, awakened so early in life by the wonders of Nature and language,

Tagore left an enduring legacy that is still celebrated today, in India and throughout the world. Through his life and work, his voice continues to speak to the future, as in these lines from *Gitanjali*:

*Where words come out from the
depth of truth;
Where tireless striving
stretches its arms towards
perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward
by thee into ever-widening
thought and action—
into that heaven of freedom,
my Father,
Let my country awake.*

Kathleen O'Connell
University of Toronto

an ethical stance desperately needed in the world. Six months later, he announced his plan to begin medical school and, eventually, establish a hospital in Africa.

"My relatives and friends reproached me for the folly of my enterprise," he says in his autobiography, *Out of My Life and Thought*. He was accused of "burying the talent entrusted to me" and "scolded" by his organ teacher in Paris who imagined a brilliant career for his star pupil. But as much as Schweitzer was endowed with energy and intelligence, he was also endowed with stubbornness. "I believed... that I had the inner fortitude to endure any eventual failure of my plan."

When Schweitzer and his young wife left for Africa in 1913, they had just enough money for about a year. The first years in Lambaréné were fraught with difficulties, from resilient rats

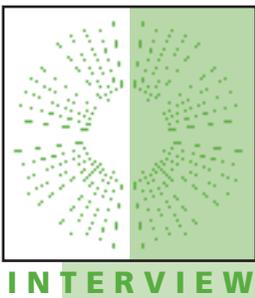
to infectious diseases made worse by the tropical climate. But, in time, the Schweitzer Hospital in Lambaréné, Gabon, West Africa, grew into the remarkable facility it is today, and Dr. Schweitzer grew into his idealistic vision of himself. His life became one of service and inspiration to others. Meanwhile, his untranslatable idea of "*Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*," ("Reverence for Life" in English and "Respect de la Vie" in French) evolved as the philosophical underpinning of the life he had chosen.

Today, Schweitzer's life and legacy are celebrated through a network of organizations that work to promote service to humanity, primarily in the realm of global public health. Groups of German, French, and Swiss supporters work closely with the Health Ministry of Gabon to maintain a 150-bed hospital, several community health dispensaries, and state-of-the-

art medical research facility in Lambaréné. In 2006, Hospital Albert Schweitzer of Deschappelles, Haiti, marks its 50th year of operation. And the Boston-based Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (ASF) is working to increase the number of annual Schweitzer Fellows to 300 in seven American cities, in addition to the young medical students chosen to go to Lambaréné each summer.

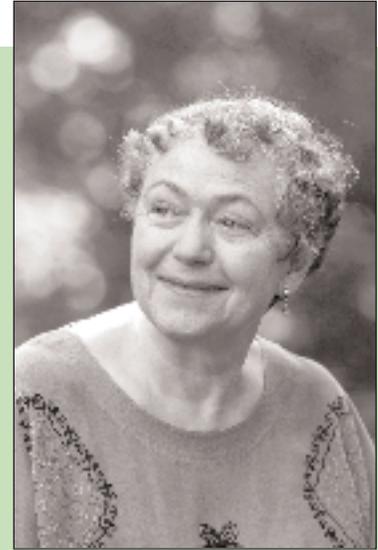
"It is through the idealism of youth that man catches sight of truth," Schweitzer once said. Ultimately, Schweitzer's legacy is not just that of a healer and peacemaker, but of a person who lived with what we might call intergenerational intelligence. His respect for life included respect for all stages of life, beginning with the youthful idealism that fueled his lifelong spirit.

Patti M. Marxsen



Composing a Conversation with Mary Catherine Bateson

Mary Catherine Bateson is a writer and cultural anthropologist. She recently completed three years as a Visiting Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has written and co-authored many books and articles, lectured across the country and abroad, and is president of the Institute for Intercultural Studies in New York City. Until recently, she was the Clarence J. Robinson Professor in Anthropology and English at George Mason University and is now Professor Emerita. Her books include *Composing a Life*, *With a Daughter's Eye*, and *Willing to Learn: Passages of Personal Discovery*. Bateson was interviewed at the Center by publications manager Patti M. Marxsen.



PM: *Let's begin with a little background on cultural anthropology, a field many of us associate with the work of your parents, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson.*

MCB: When my parents went into anthropology, anthropologists were almost entirely focused on pre-literate societies that were still fairly isolated. My parents met in New Guinea, which is an archipelago with something like 700 languages and lots of different regional groups, each with its own religion, its own traditions, stories, and artistic styles.

PM: *When did your mother write her most famous work, *Coming of Age in Samoa*?*

MCB: That was in the 1920s. After that, she went to New Guinea. But from the very beginning she looked at research on pre-literate peoples as relevant to our understanding of our own society. When she wrote about Samoa, she wrote about it to advance our understanding of adolescence. Similarly, she believed that looking at childhood in a stone age society was relevant to understanding the human condition in general.

PM: *That's a radical idea, that we might learn from "primitive" people, isn't it?*

MCB: We still have a lot to learn. One place where you will find that idea expressed a lot today is in the environmental field. People are arguing that indigenous peoples are closer to their environment and more respectful. We could learn a lot from them on that.

PM: *You wrote a very successful book titled *Composing a Life*. There and elsewhere you speak about the composition of lives as an art form. In what way do human lives, especially women's lives, mirror the process of creative work?*

MCB: I started writing about American women at a time when women's lives had changed a great deal and we were trying to combine aspects of life that had previously been regarded as impossible to combine: careers and marriage, careers and family. And most women of my generation could not plan their lives to be like their mothers, so we were trying to do this without models.

PM: *This has made our lives more interesting, but has it also made our relationships with our mothers a little more complicated?*

MCB: Yes, it has. But although that was a very radical shift we went through, it has now become the norm. No one

can any longer assume that their lives will be modeled on the life of their same-sex parent, male or female.

PM: *Can't a person choose to "follow in my father's footsteps"?*

MCB: Suppose there is this fellow who says, "I am going to be a doctor. My father was a doctor; my grandfather was a doctor; that's my family tradition." He thinks he is going to imitate his father, but in fact he cannot be a doctor in the same way as his father or grandfather. He is going to have to deal with managed care and he is going to have to learn all kinds of new technologies. The economics and organization of healthcare has changed radically, not to mention the disease conditions that are being addressed. So, that young man will have a very different career, even though he may be "a doctor like his father."

PM: *This calls on our creativity.*

MCB: Yes, the amount of creative problem solving needed in a particular life has increased greatly. My argument in *Composing a Life* was not just that it takes creativity to put the pieces together and deal with the discontinuities in women's lives, but that one could regard this process as a creative art form, instead of as a compromise.



The amount of creative problem solving needed in a particular life has increased greatly.
.....

PM: *If women are now more experienced at this, because of the shifts that we went through in the twentieth century, does it hold that we are now more adaptable and creative than men?*

MCB: I don't think we are more adaptable or creative than men, but I do think that women are more aware of the need for creative improvisation in their lives than men are because we are so aware of the magnitude of the change we have lived through. And now it's happening with aging. As we think about aging, we tend to think that old people are like the grandparents we knew, and that is how we are supposed to be.

PM: *Yes, that would be logical.*

MCB: It is logical, but remember that our grandparents grew up in a different world, aged in a different way, had different kinds of medical care, and so, just as women had to figure out how to be women unlike their mothers, people coming up on formal retirement now have to figure out how to be older adults. They will not be like their grandparents, because they are likely to live on for many more active years than their grandparents.

PM: *You characterize this post-retirement phase of life as the time for Active Wisdom and you define it as a new developmental stage of life. Tell us more about that.*

MCB: The big mental shift you have to make is to realize that increased longevity is not an extension of old age. It is a new developmental stage inserted between adulthood and old age anywhere between age 50 and 80, and, for some people, age 90. People go back to school, they form new marriages, they take up new avocations, and they are inventing new ways of growing old. This is Active Wisdom. The reason why I use that phrase is that wisdom is the most positive trait we associate with old people. In the past, you didn't have a

long life of experience leading to wisdom in combination with many years of continuing energy and health that allow you to be very active.

PM: *In this context, are there patterns or common themes in women's lives, patterns that cut across cultures for women as they age?*

MCB: I think the commonalities in women's lives are biological ones. Childbearing, for example, is a common experience, even though different societies elaborate things differently. In America, we live in a society that tends to devalue older people and put a lot of emphasis on youth. So women often feel unattractive and dye their hair and get cosmetic surgery and try to look younger, and increasingly men are doing the same thing. These things have a lot to do with social values. In societies where older people are respected and valued, people make an effort to look older.

PM: *America, and many industrialized societies, seem to value money and power over wisdom or age.*

MCB: I think we still have the idea that wisdom matters. If you look at someone like Jimmy Carter, there is a kind of respect that has developed for him that is related to his age and reflectiveness and where he has been and what he has done. But we don't give people that kind of respect unless they have been keeping up.

PM: *He is a good model of wisdom and continual growth. This recognition that people never stop changing and learning is part of what I love about your thinking.*

MCB: Yes, we keep growing and changing. And one of the great disadvantages of the nuclear family is that you don't have as much intimate diversity as you would have in an extended family or a close-knit community. So you may not have the opportunity to know people of many different ages as they move through life.

PM: *Do you expect to see another global generational rebellion like the one in the sixties? The world is certainly in a very precarious state and there are a lot of things going on that you would expect the youth of the world to reject and want to do better.*

MCB: I think there will always be idealistic young people, though we could certainly use more at present, and we could talk about why there aren't as many as there used to be. But I think that particular discontinuity in the 1960s may have been a special case.

PM: *Let's talk about idealistic old people. Back to this new developmental stage of Active Wisdom, something you also call Adulthood II to emphasize that it is not "added on" to life expectancy but inserted between retirement and old age. You have written about people in this phase of life as valuable resources. Why is that such a radical idea and why is it more common to look at old people as a burden?*

MCB: Well, they used to be more dependent in various ways and very old people still are. The concept of institutionalized retirement and pensions was invented for the German Civil Service right around the turn of the twentieth century. The notion was that if someone was 65 or 70 years old, and had worked all his life in the Civil Service, he should not become a beggar. In the United States at that time, life expectancy at birth was 45, and globally it was something like 32.

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Guest Interview

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The point is that the number of people who survived on the job to retirement age was fairly small and they didn't stay on their pensions for very long. Now we have increasing numbers of retired people, but as long as they are healthy the solution is to think in terms of continuing participation and contribution.

PM: Those numbers are astonishing. Things have certainly changed.

MCB: Yes, things have changed dramatically. Most people are still alive at 65 and most of them are going to hang around for another 10 years, and a lot of them 15, 20, maybe 30 years. What's so sacred about age 65? It has been frozen as a symbolic turning point, but this no longer makes sense. We are still telling people that they should retire and take it easy. I think we need to be telling people, "Contribute, do something worthwhile, participate!"

PM: What I see in my retired friends is a lot of very purposeful volunteer work. These are people who have financial security, so they can do that. But it would be interesting to see them getting paid by organizations because they are bringing real skills.

MCB: One of the things that needs to be done is to make it easier for retired people to get work that fits their lives.

PM: Should we try to stop thinking in terms of "retirement"? Is that the wrong language?

MCB: I think we are going to get increasingly flexible about when and how "retirement" comes. I think we are going to allow various forms of phased retirement and part-time careers for older people, as well as new post-retirement patterns. In our society, we tend to think of work as a burden for a lot of reasons, but life without work can also be a burden.

*One of the things
that needs to be done is
to make it easier for
retired people to get
work that fits their lives.*

*PM: I am still a little hung up on the word retired. I think it probably comes from the French word *retirer*, to draw back, as if you want to pull away from the stream of life. But that seems like the wrong image. Maybe "transformation" would be more appropriate.*

MCB: That's a good point. But maybe retirement in its original sense continues to make sense but at a much later time. I have met people who say they have retired twice. They have retired from their main career at 60-something and then, after taking up another interest, they finally stop working at 80-something and say, "Well, now I really am going to stop!"

PM: If we could harness all that "active wisdom," it could change the world.

MCB: Why don't we say "release" and not "harness." The wisdom is there, but sometimes it is wasted. The assumption that is made about old people by politicians, for example, is that they are only concerned about themselves, their rights, their benefits. If you are helpless and sick and in pain, you are pretty likely to be focused on your own situation, but if you are energetic and in decent health and not impoverished it doesn't follow that you are self-obsessed.

PM: It might even follow that you have a particular investment or sense of the future.

MCB: None of us is going to live forever, but our sense of the future is based on our involvement with young people, especially grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I think people

in their eighties care a lot about what the world is going to be like, because they look at their grandchildren and great-grandchildren and they say, "What world will this child live in?"

*PM: Much of your writing has been autobiographical and within that category you've written with great sensitivity about your famous parents in essays as well as your book, *With a Daughter's Eye: A Memoir of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson*. Your essay on your father's death entitled "Six Days of Dying" is particularly moving. In what way was his death a learning experience for you?*

MCB: One of the things that I feel strongly about is that death is a part of life and simply extending life should not be our primary value. Our value should be on living well, living creatively, instead of just additional time. What we need to do is work hard to give those who are born the possibility of good lives and, in our own way, come to terms with the reality of death and be ready for it eventually.

*PM: In *Willing to Learn*, you pull together a number of essays and articles written over many years. What was it like to bring all of that together?*

MCB: I was looking over a lifetime's work, really, with a lot of apparent discontinuity. The connecting threads surprised and interested me, and as I reread things that I wrote many years ago, I found the beginnings of ideas that I am working with now and saw how those interests have played out over time and developed.

PM: What are you going to write about next?

MCB: I am thinking of using the technique of *Composing a Life* to write about people in *Adulthood II*. That seems to be the logical next step.

PM: That is a book I will want to read. Thank you for your wisdom. 

The Essence of Humanism and the Art of Compromise: 2006 Peace Proposal

Daisaku Ikeda opens his 2006 Peace Proposal, *Towards a New Era of the People, The Noble Path to Peace*, by referring to the crises facing humankind and the many shocking catastrophes of 2005: Hurricane Katrina, the Kashmir earthquake, continuing drought in West Africa, the “indiscriminate violence” of terrorist attacks worldwide, and the ongoing losses to intolerance, hate crimes, and preventable illnesses. He also notes that 2005 marked the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the creation of the United Nations.

Observing how naked individualism has “stripped” us of “bonds and ties of family... community... religious and other affiliations; and of nature itself,” Ikeda quotes environmentalist Bill McKibben when he writes, “We stand on the edge of disappearing even as individuals.” Recognizing that the state of the world can cause “creeping and unnamable anxiety” Dr. Ikeda warns that quick, superficial remedies “could easily backfire, plunging people into an even deeper state of helplessness and despair,” and offers the environmental movement’s admonition, “Think globally and act locally.”

Dr. Ikeda finds a wonderful model of this approach in the life and writings of sixteenth-century French essayist and humanist Michel de Montaigne who, “through an uncompromising pursuit of the humanity of a single individual—himself—uncovered a



Above: Members of the UN Club of Soka University Japan enjoyed an afternoon at the BRC.

universal vision of all humankind.” Long before the concept of “freedom of religion had been articulated,” Montaigne penned an essay entitled “Freedom of Conscience.” Dr. Ikeda compares this and other essays by Montaigne to “the lotus flower whose pure white blooms emerge from the depth of the muddy waters.”

Montaigne’s work illustrates the “very essence of humanism” and encourages Dr. Ikeda’s hopes for progress among Asian nations despite continuing divisions “colored by the conflicts and tensions of the Cold War.” He expresses his hope that Asia might be inspired by the unifying model of the European Community, now almost a half-century old, and might learn from Montaigne “the art of compromise and finding middle ground where unrealistically high expectations can lead to failure.” This, Dr. Ikeda believes, will help them “see beyond the limits of national interest and make a concerted effort to build a community of nations free from the reality or threat of war.”

Soka University UN Club Visits BRC

In early February, an international youth group from Soka University Japan visited the BRC. The goal of the annual trip of the Soka University UN Club is for students to learn more about the United Nations and meet with leaders in the United States to explore how they can contribute to peace.

The students participated in an exchange with BRC staff and executive director Virginia Benson to learn about the history and programs of the Center. Their eagerness to find their own mission in life and desire to work for world peace was evident during the question and answer session. Following their time in Cambridge, the club traveled to the United Nations headquarters in New York to meet with Ambassador Chowdhury and other UN representatives.

MENTOR AND DISCIPLE: The Globalization of an Ancient Idea

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The research and writing of *Encountering the Dharma* involved wrestling with my understanding of the mentor-disciple relationship and what it means to Soka Gakkai members in the world today. The mentor-disciple relationship is grounded in the idea of a teaching lineage, an Asian institution based on the transmission of spiritual wisdom from teacher to disciple. Western religions, in contrast, tend to be congregational in form, a model of community expressed in the ideas of the people of Israel, the Christian church, and the *ummah* of Islam.

More specifically, the lineage model has ancient roots in India, where the guru (teacher) and *shishya* (disciple) have long been a component of education, whether in religion, philosophy, music, or the arts. In Hinduism, the guru teaches the *shishya* both learned wisdom and lived experience. In exchange, the disciple is expected

Experiencing the efficacy of Buddhist Humanism and spreading it to others embodies the essence of the mentor-disciple relationship.

to pursue his (or her) education with diligence and to give gratitude and loyalty to the teacher. This relationship is formalized with rituals that strengthen the guru-*shishya* bond, which often takes the form of a student's devotion to a spiritual master. This basic arrangement was taken up into Buddhism and spread throughout Asia. The teacher is still honored today in Theravada Buddhism as a source of inspiration and guidance to students who walk the eight-fold path. It plays a critical role in the practice of Vajrayana in Tibet and is central to the Zen concept of mind-to-mind transmission.

This ancient lineage model also operates in the Soka Gakkai, although in a thoroughly modernized form that evolved over the course of decades. It operates most conspicuously in the relationships among the three presidents—Tsunesboro Makiguchi (1870-1944), Josei Toda (1900-1958), and Daisaku Ikeda today. Makiguchi built the Gakkai on a hybrid foundation, part modern liberal arts pedagogy, part ancient Buddhism of the Lotus Sutra. He poured his wisdom and experience into Toda who reciprocated with loyalty and gratitude and, eventually, took up the mantle of leadership during the American Occupation of Japan (1945-1952). Working from Makiguchi's legacy, Toda recast the movement to address the needs of people during Japan's post-war reconstruction. Like his mentor before him, he devoted himself to his disciple, the young Ikeda. When Ikeda succeeded Toda in 1958, he worked out of the two legacies bequeathed to him to address the needs of a globalizing age in which Japan grew prosperous and took its place among the leading nations of the world.

As I interviewed Gakkai pioneers who knew the early presidents, I began to understand that the mentor-disciple relationship is highly effective not only as a spiritual connection but as a model of institutional organization. Its trans-generational bond based on shared wisdom, affection, loyalty, and respect fosters continuity even as it allows for change. This continuity of understanding enabled each president to address challenges that arose in very different historical circumstances. So vital are these relationships that I often had to remind myself that Makiguchi and Ikeda never knew each other, a fact easily overlooked because the former is so powerful a presence in the latter's writing and rhetoric.

But the mentor-disciple relationship also operates far more broadly insofar as millions of people have chosen to think of themselves as disciples of one or another of the three presidents. In this perspective, the Asian lineage model begins to take on the look of the western congregation because the Gakkai's teacher-president, often called sensei (teacher), is the hub of the relationships that form both a mass movement and numerous, smaller congregations or communities. The latter are typically based on face-to-face relationships among members in local centers and in arts and professional groups, the formation of which was part of a modernization process fostered by Ikeda under Toda and during his own lengthy administration.

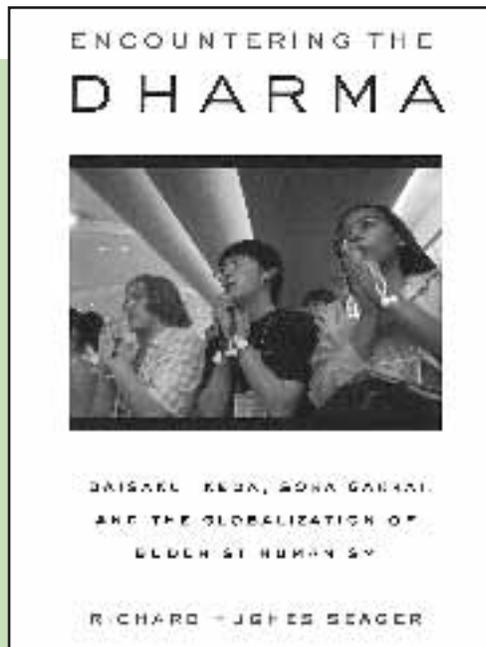
This mentor-disciple plus intentional community arrangement now operates on a global scale. But it is Gakkai members' love for Ikeda—a man whom many of them have never met—that forms the bond that has, for more than three decades, held the movement together. The power of the relationship between Ikeda and his disciples is something those outside the movement do not understand and often find problematic. "Is the affection Gakkai members have for their leader to be trusted?" people have asked me. "Why are they are so fond of quoting Ikeda?"

As I observed the movement up close for a number of years, I began to see that the inner quality of this bond is suggested by the Gakkai's special use of the word "mentor," which is standard usage in English to refer to Ikeda in his role as leader and teacher. Although related to guru or master, the meaning of mentor is several steps removed. It lacks a sense of a formal, hierarchical relationship; it has a secular ring and no mystical overtones. It presupposes

freedom of choice, which is an ideal at the heart of modernity. Princeton University WordNet defines mentor as “wise and trusted guide and advisor.” “To mentor,” means to “serve as a teacher or trusted counselor,” an apt description of Ikeda who understands his role in terms of service to his disciples. “Mentor” and “mentoring” are also in wide use today in the academic and business communities, where knowledge and experience are often passed on from professor to student or veteran entrepreneur to protégé in a relationship that is professional, but often marked by a degree of mutual affection.

But still, Gakkai members mean something more than secular mentoring when they talk of the relationships between Ikeda and his disciples around the world. In numerous interviews, Gakkai members have described for me how Ikeda has given them intimate attention—a personal letter sent during hard times, a small gift given as an encouragement, an impromptu conversation with a young student at Soka University during one of Ikeda’s visits. More importantly, people in Japan, Singapore, the U.S., and Brazil often spoke to me of how Ikeda taught them to cultivate lives well-lived both through his writing and by his example. Ikeda’s Buddhist Humanism had transformed them by enabling them to restore their ideals, find inner strength, or develop self-discipline.

Robert Epp, a translator and Japan scholar, describes Ikeda as speaking to people who may find themselves adrift in the modern world, in search of a clear direction or moral purpose in the midst of the moral chaos of consumer society. A successful man but of very modest origins, Ikeda has not distanced himself from his roots and retains a fundamental trust in the instincts of working people. Calling him a “cultural exorcist,” Epp sees Ikeda as teaching a Buddhism that is also a “redemptive therapy,” an empowering practice that enables



Encountering the Dharma

Richard Seager is an Associate Professor of Religion at Hamilton College who knows his way around *Buddhism in America*, which happens to be the title of a book he wrote a few years ago. But with the publication of his latest work, he is likely to become best known as the Great Gaijin, the Japanese word for “foreigner.” *Encountering the Dharma: Daisaku Ikeda,*

Soka Gakkai, and the Globalization of Buddhist Humanism is an exploration of the Soka Gakkai and its history, a project Seager embarked on with the support of the Boston Research Center in 2001. With an engaging narrative style, Seager informs and inspires the reader through his global exploration of this dynamic lay organization that has grown from a few thousand to over 12 million since the 1940s. Written in the shadow of grief as he adapted to the tragic loss of his wife, Seager’s experiences in Japan, Singapore, and South America led him to memorable people of all ages whose faith and optimism energized his soul. As a self-proclaimed skeptic surrounded by joyful believers, Seager’s work goes to the heart of the role of faith in our world today. To order, please contact the University of California Press at www.ucpress.edu. To learn more, please check out the Book Talk page at www.brc21.org/books_booktalk.html.

people to make their way through the isolation and alienation of urban living. A balanced blend of idealism and pragmatism, Buddhist Humanism provides members with “a meaningful picture of the world and a relevant plan of action to deal with it.” It enables people to act in society rather than to withdraw from it, to find self-esteem and spiritual worth by discovering a meaningful role in the world in the context of a caring community.

Such an interpretation of Ikeda’s mentoring also clarifies what it means to be a disciple, which WordNet defines “as someone who believes and helps to spread the doctrine of another.” Time and again, Gakkai members have told me how Buddhist Humanism not only helped them but

led to their wanting to help others, whether through community service, peacework, education, the arts, or by sharing Ikeda’s teaching. Experiencing the efficacy of Buddhist Humanism and spreading it to others embodies the essence of the mentor-disciple relationship. It is the living force in the trans-generational bond between the three presidents and the engine behind the growth of the movement from its origins in war-time Japan into a worldwide movement. It is, moreover, the dynamic energy within a religious institution that reaches back into Asian antiquity for its basic form, but draws upon global modernity to express its spirit.

Richard Hughes Seager

BOOK TALK

Enduring Visions of the Philosophy and Practice of Education

The Center is pleased to announce that in the spring of 2006, the chapters for *Enduring Visions of the Philosophy and Practice of Education* (working title), edited by David T. Hansen of Teachers College, Columbia University, were completed. With publication anticipated in 2007, this volume explores the life, work, and legacy of ten twentieth-century philosophers of education. “This book confirms that educational ideas emerge in response to particular conditions, experiences, problems, fears, and hopes,” Hansen said. “Ideas have consequences and individual human beings *do* make a difference in the course of events.” The chapters included are as follows:

- **Introduction:** David Hansen, Teachers College, Columbia University
- **Rabindranath Tagore and Creative Education:** Kathleen O’Connell, University of Toronto
- **Peace as a Premise for Learning: Maria Montessori:** Jennifer Whitcomb, University of Colorado, and Jacqueline Cossentino, University of Maryland
- **Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Value Creation:** Andrew Gebert, Waseda University, and Monte Joffee, The Renaissance School, NYC
- **Jane Addams and Education as Personal and Civic Growth:** Charlene Haddock Seigfried, Purdue University
- **Artful Curriculum, Evaluation, and Instruction:** Lessons from Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf Education: Bruce Uhrmacher, University of Colorado
- **Paulo Freire’s Politics and Pedagogy:** Stephen M. Fishman and Lucille McCarthy, University of NC (Charlotte) and University of Maryland Baltimore County
- **Tao Xingzhi and Modernization through Mass Education in China:** Zhang Kaiyuan and Wang Weijia, Central China Normal University
- **W.E.B. Du Bois and an Education for Democratic Creativity:** Rodino Anderson, Teachers College
- **Albert Schweitzer: Reverence for Life as a Model of Teaching and Learning:** A.G. Rud, Purdue University
- **John Dewey and the Quest for Meaning:** David Hansen, Teachers College, Columbia University

AERA Symposium Hosted by the BRC

An international symposium entitled *Four Enduring Philosophies of Education and the Challenges Facing Teachers Today* was hosted by the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in April. The event, which was chaired by Doris Santoro Gómez, Bowdoin College, included speakers on several of the philosophers covered in the Center’s forthcoming book. Papers were presented on Maria Montessori, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Rabindranath Tagore, and John Dewey. Presenters highlighted aspects of these figures’ primary educational and ethical teachings, and connected them to current educational challenges and predicaments. Ann Diller of the University of New Hampshire served as discussant. For an in-depth summary of the AERA Symposium, go to www.brc21.org/resources.html.

IN MEMORIAM



Bradley P. Dean

February 4, 1954 – January 14, 2006

- Independent Scholar
- Editor, *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, and Henry David Thoreau’s *The Dispersion of Seeds* (1993), *Wild Fruits* (2000), *Letters to a Spiritual Seeker* (2004), and *Indian Notebooks* (unfinished)
- University Lecturer: Eastern Washington University, University of Connecticut, Rhode Island College, East Carolina University, and Indiana University
- Director, Media Center, Thoreau Institute

Brad brought his boundless love of life and engagement to our Inaugural Ikeda Forum for Intercultural Dialogue in October 2004 where he quoted lines of Thoreau from *Wild Fruits*:

*All Nature is doing her best
each moment to make us well.
She exists for no other end.
Do not resist her.*



As we think about the diversity of global society, we often forget that the world encompasses several generations living simultaneously on one planet. With Living Legacies and Intergenerational Creativity as over-arching themes, we wanted to explore the ways in which voices from the past remain relevant today.

A perfect example emerged with Shulamith Koenig's Eleanor Roosevelt Lecture on Global Vision. Now, more than ever, the UN Declaration of Human Rights reminds us what it means to live together in peace. We also wanted to ask a few questions about aging. And so we invited cultural anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson to share her perspective on a new phase of life, a period she calls Active Wisdom.

Youth carries its own wisdom, as we realized when the Soka University of Japan UN Club visited the Center. Their energy, idealism, and eagerness to learn were palpable and inspiring. Not surprisingly, these same qualities have fueled many influential lives; we highlight two of them in this issue: Rabindranath Tagore and Albert Schweitzer, both Nobel Laureates whose turning points came early.

Richard Hughes Seager takes our inquiry one step further with his article on the mentor/disciple relationship, a concept central to Asian culture. As each generation leaves behind a legacy, each new generation recreates the world out of past and present knowledge. The synthesis is wisdom.

Sincerely,
Patti M. Marxsen

Mission Statement

The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (BRC) is an international peace institute. The Center was founded in 1993 by Daisaku Ikeda, a peace activist and president of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), one of the most dynamic and diverse Buddhist organizations in the world. Inspired by the SGI's philosophy of value creation (Soka), the BRC works to build cultures of peace through dialogue and education. Our dialogue programs include public forums, scholarly seminars, and peacemaking circles that are diverse and intergenerational. Through these programs, scholars and activists are able to forge unexpected connections, refresh their sense of purpose, and learn from each other in a spirit of camaraderie. The overarching goal of these gatherings is to contribute to a shift in U.S. culture from isolation, violence, and war to interconnectedness, nonviolence, and peace. The BRC also works to encourage the peaceful aspirations of young people through multi-author books that are published by academic presses. Our titles, such as *Buddhist Peacework*, *Subverting Hatred*, *Subverting Greed*, and *Educating Citizens for Global Awareness*, introduce humanistic values and concerns that rarely make it into the typical curriculum. So far, they've been used as supplemental texts in over 325 college and university courses in the United States, Canada, and Japan.

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We welcome your advice, ideas, and comments, as well as requests for complimentary examination copies of our books. Individual staff members can be reached by calling 617-491-1090 or via fax at 617-491-1169. Email addresses are listed below:

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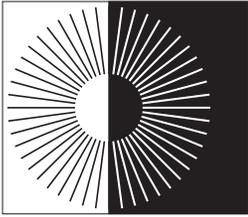
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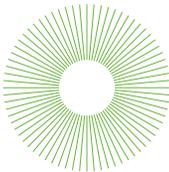


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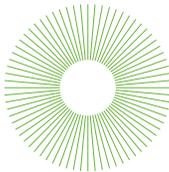
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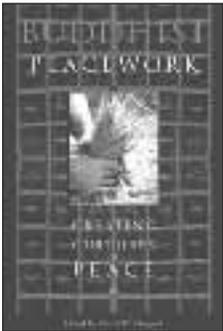


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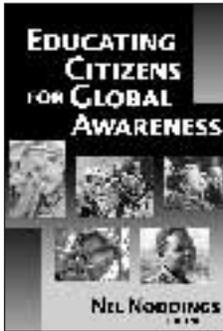
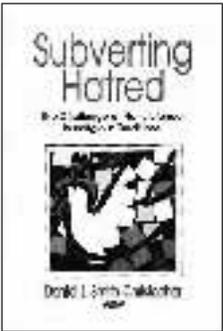
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