

PRESENTATION

# Dr. Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy on Peace and Peace Studies at Soka University<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. The Establishment of Soka University Peace Research Institute

“Be a fortress for the peace of humankind.” is one of the founding principles of Soka University that was put forward by the founder Dr. Daisaku Ikeda. Although Soka University has been expected to be a base for peace creation from the beginning of its founding, specific initiatives for peace studies started with the establishment of Soka University Peace Research Institute in 1976.

3 years after the establishment of the research institute, the first issue of a research bulletin titled “Soka University Peace Research” was published. Dr. Ikeda made a special contribution to this issue

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1 This paper is prepared for Thammasat University — Soka University Joint Seminar, “Role of research and pedagogy in the promotion of peace, sustainable development and global citizenship”, August 22, 2019 at Thammasat University, Thailand.

with an article called the “Peace Guidelines toward 21st Century.”<sup>2</sup> This year marks the 40th anniversary of the publication of the article on peace by Dr. Daisaku Ikeda.

In the article Dr. Daisaku Ikeda presented his thoughts of peace through the problems of nuclear weapons. It is thought that his philosophy was derived from the Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons by Mr. Josei Toda, one of the founders of Soka Education.

Before I proceed, I would like to review international politics at the time when the “Peace Guidelines” was published.

In the 1970s, the United States and the Soviet Union started to jointly manage accidental nuclear wars, leading to the period so-called DÉTENTE. In 1972, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) Agreement was signed to set a limit on the number of nuclear warheads. However, these events still did not mean the arrival of peace. The number of nuclear bombs manufactured by the United States and the Soviet Union increased rapidly, and regional conflicts in Asia and Africa broke out. In the wake of the fourth Middle East War which erupted in 1973, the so-called “oil crisis” caused significant damage to the global economy.

Now, let’s look at the development of Peace Studies. The anti-nuclear movement spread globally in the 1950s amid a mounting sense of crisis over a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Russell-Einstein Manifesto was announced in 1955, leading to the Pugwash Conference in 1957, through which scientists called for the prevention of nuclear war. Thus, Mr. Josei Toda announced the Declaration Calling for the Abolition of

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2 *Soka University Peace Research*, No.1, 1979 (『創大平和研究』創刊号1979年)

Nuclear Weapons in Yokohama in the same year. Peace Studies was increasingly institutionalized in the 50's and 60's, for example, in 1964, the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) was established.

In the 1970s, many peace researchers worked to determine the cause of the worsening situation that was far from peace, such as continuous nuclear arms races despite the period of DÉTENTE, the deepening poverty in the third world, and the increasing regional conflicts. Researchers began critical examinations with the hypothesis that the very structure of the international community was causing problems to create violence, which was hindering peace.

During this period, peace studies in Japan were also further institutionalized. The Peace Studies Association of Japan was established in 1973, so was the Institute for Peace Science Hiroshima University in 1975. The latter was the first peace research institute in a Japanese university. Soka University Peace Research Institute was founded in the following year of 1976. We could say that Soka was one of the pioneers of the peace research institutes in Japan.

Looking at international politics again, the U.S.-Soviet relationship began to show signs of deterioration again in 1977. As a result of the rapid advance of nuclear arms races, the Soviet Union deployed a new type of medium-range nuclear missiles, while the United States set out the policy of nuclear deployment to destroy the military targets of the Soviet Union. The U.S.'s plan was based on its nuclear missile technology with improved accuracy to hitting targets.

Against such background, the U.N. General Assembly held the first Special Session on Disarmament in 1978, and Dr. Daisaku Ikeda submitted a disarmament proposal to the General Assembly. I think this was the first time for Dr. Ikeda to make a full-fledged peace proposal. It was the following year, in 1979, that he published the

article the “Peace Guidelines toward 21st Century.”

The year of 1979 saw the conflict involving the socialist nations, namely, Sino-Vietnamese War, the emergence of anti-American Islamic force through the establishment of the Iranian revolutionary government, and the invasion of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. These events crucially worsened U.S.-Soviet relations. The second Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) was signed the same year but was never ratified. Thus, the so-called “New Cold War” broke out. Dr. Daisaku Ikeda began making proposals as to how to deal with this situation to the second U.N. Special Session on Disarmament in 1982, as well in the SGI Peace Proposals made annually since 1983. I see that the basic idea underlying these proposals appears in the article the “Peace Guidelines toward 21st Century.”

## **2. The points of the “Peace Guidelines toward 21st Century”**

Dr. Daisaku Ikeda stated at the beginning of the “Peace Guidelines” that the trend of anti-war and peace is still not the norm of the world. And according to him, from ancient times, humans have gained a great political and economic benefit by winning a war. Humans have seen wars and revolutions as the source of energy to destroy old systems stuck with contradiction and create a new society. Besides, wars have been positively evaluated as creating new values despite great destruction, based on such a belief that humans gain creativity and virtues by risking life. But he insisted that despite all these beliefs, humans still need to abolish wars, and to pursue peace.

And he continued that it is because the destruction and slaughter caused by wars now have become so huge to the extent that all conventional reasons to justify wars are canceled out. And then,

he pointed out the properties of wars deteriorated because of “the increasing tendency where men are used by weapons rather than men using weapons, and humans are increasingly placing themselves under complete control of weapons and wars.” Moreover, he noted that the civilization of wars where humans have no control will only lead to the threat of a nuclear war.

I would like to point out that Dr. Ikeda was already aware 40 years ago that the key to overcoming human challenges was to restore humanity to the international community. Dr. Ikeda has consistently suggested “how to restore humanity” in his peace proposals. The words humanity and humanism that Dr. Ikeda used does not mean to encourage an egoistic human-centered principle. He defines the original humanity as the function full of altruism and creativity.

While Dr. Daisaku Ikeda realistically acknowledged the cruel nature of human beings that was increasing the risk of nuclear wars and making them kill each other without even reflecting, he proposed the path of not giving up on such negative nature of humans and transforming them into a good existence with altruism and creativity. He wrote about a demon with an arrogant ego who does not care about others and uses others as measures to satisfy his desire at the expense of others. However, Dr. Ikeda said humans have a moral nature with strong lifeblood that conquers the life of such a demon. Humans also have the lifeblood for compassion, to feel happy by leading others to happiness. Dr. Ikeda suggests that humans have to pursue such an existence. I think this part manifests Dr. Ikeda's creativity as a Buddhist teacher.

In the “Peace Guidelines”, he based this idea of the restoration of humanity to discuss six issues that need to be addressed including Peace and the Constitution of Japan, the North-South divide, and

international organizations and so on.

Japan's constitution is an increasingly important topic in considering the future of Japan's security policy, which had changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War. The Constitution of Japan endorses non-war and peace. However, how to pave a path to peaceful policies in accordance with the spirit of the constitution based on Japan's currently standpoint is a crucial issue in peace studies, as Japan is strengthening its military capabilities and advancing to the international community in line with the reinforced Japan-U.S. alliance.

Looking at the issue of the North-South divide today, globalization has deepened economic problems, such as speculative financial transactions and a globally widening gap between the rich and the poor. In terms of the issue of the United Nations, its existence as a parliament for human beings ever more significant to examine global governance despite various limitations and problems.

And today, as it is even more crucial for the international community to take actions to build peace and prevent conflicts, the Japanese government is focusing on this field, and many peace researchers are working on this issue. In 2005, the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission was established, which was a long-held proposal of Dr. Ikeda.

In concluding the "Peace Guidelines", he pointed out the importance of education and religions to overcome challenges and create peace.

"Human beings must not become slaves to what they have created, whether it is systems or nuclear weapons. Humans themselves must play the leading role. The inner transformation

of individuals creates inevitable wave motions and inevitable results, to bring regeneration of sense of values to all aspects such as politics, economy, culture, and education. It is a total regeneration of thinking of the whole human race with the humans playing a leading role. I believe that such regeneration of thinking will become the origin of the response from inner selves that deters the nuclear threat from the outside.”

“What is our mission in the flow of history from the past to the present and the future? It is to believe in human goodness, and inspire and enlighten others, while returning to the eternal and fundamental standpoint that nothing is more of a being of dignity than humans and that our lives are the greatest treasure.”

As such, my understanding is that the guidelines for peace studies at Soka University outlined in the “Peace Guidelines toward 21st Century” are to inspire and enlighten the innate goodness of humans.

### **3. Fostering Global Citizens for Building Peace and Sustainable Prosperity**

When Soka University was selected to Top Global University Project in 2014, Soka University set its goal of the project “Global Initiative for Humanistic Education—Fostering Global Citizens for Building Peace and Sustainable Prosperity.” I think this goal matches the guidelines of the founder that I have introduced so far.

At the heart of this project is the Global Core Center, under which School of International Peace Studies (SIPS) plays a leading role for education, while Soka University Peace Research Institute (SUPRI) takes initiatives on research.

Currently, SUPRI is focusing on the following topics for its research activities:

- (1) Human Security and the SDGs
- (2) Global Justice and Human Rights
- (3) Multilateralism in Asia
- (4) Peacebuilding in Africa

Dr. Daisaku Ikeda has frequently mentioned the importance of the idea of Human Security since the time shortly after the UNDP's Human Development Report was published in 1994. And in January 1995 in particular, he urged the international community to dramatically change its thinking towards regaining human sovereignty in a lecture titled "Peace and Human Security" at the East-West Center in Hawaii, which had made an earnest request to Dr. Ikeda to visit. That year was when the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake hit Japan. First of all, Dr. Ikeda was making great efforts to help and encourage those who were devastated by the earthquake until just before leaving for Hawaii. This lecture was delivered when Dr. Ikeda himself was doing his best for Human Security.

Incidentally, Dr. Ikeda pointed out that Mr. Toda's Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, the origin of his peace philosophy, had already included the idea of human security. He pointed this out in his 2009 peace proposal titled "Building Global Solidarity toward Nuclear Abolition" as follows.<sup>3</sup>

The third pillar is that Mr. Toda argued that the protest against

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3 'Building Global Solidarity Toward Nuclear Abolition' (September 8, 2009)[<https://www.sgi.org/about-us/president-ikedas-proposals/nuclear-abolition-proposal-2009.html>]



nuclear tests should absolutely be promoted, but the issue would not be solved fundamentally unless the efforts are made to eradicate the current philosophy of security, which consists on the sacrifice of many people, citing Mr. Toda' s declaration "Even though the movement to ban tests for nuclear and atomic bombs is occurring in the world now, I want to exterminate the hidden cause."

The declaration included Mr. Toda' s passionate hope in a condensed form and was based on an approach to finding the foundation of peace by removing the misery faced by each human being. This approach derived from the vision of human security, whose importance is being called out today.

In the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, Dr. Ikeda again discussed human security in detail in the 2012 SGI Peace Proposals and presented a new perspective on the recovery of human beings and society. The following three points were raised as a vision that humans should share "Dignity of Life"<sup>4</sup>.

- A world where tragedies happening anywhere are never ignored and its citizens overcome threats in solidarity
- A world based on the empowerment of the people and where its priority is placed in protecting the dignity of all citizens and ensuring their right to live peacefully
- A world where its citizens never forget the lessons of the past and devote all their energies to overcoming the negative legacy of human history, and stop passing such legacy onto future

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4 'Peace Proposal 2012 Human Security and Sustainability: Sharing Reverence for the Dignity of Life' [<https://www.sgi.org/about-us/president-ikedas-proposals/peace-proposal-2012.html>]

generations

In the international community, the SDGs were adopted with the aim of creating a society in which all people could have the freedom from fear, freedom from poverty, and the freedom to live with dignity. I think that this is proof that the world is progressing steadily in the direction that Dr. Daisaku Ikeda has consistently advocated. Dr. Ikeda frequently mentions and recognizes the initiatives for SDGs by using the phrase “no one should be left behind.”

Under such background, SUPRI has been working on its current focuses of “promoting human security” and “contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.” Recently held international symposiums on peace and Human Security as follows;

In 2016,

“Human Security in Asia: Peacebuilding in Northeast Asia”

“Global Governance for Human Security”

“Toward the Century of Humanism: The Pursuit of Human Security and the Efforts to Abolish Nuclear Weapons”

Besides, we do Joint Research collaborated with Kyungnam University and Chinese Culture University, and we held symposium as Peace Forum.

“Creating a Peaceful Community in Asia” in Okinawa, 2017

“Prospects of Cross-strait Relations and East Asian Developments” in Taipei, 2018

“Conflict, Cooperation and Peace in East Asia” in Jeju, 2019.

In the future, SUPRI would like to deepen cooperation with other universities and research institutes in Asian countries and produce further outcomes of its research.

Incidentally, Soka University proposed the following properties as requirements of a creative human, which it strives to foster.<sup>5</sup>

- Compassion, a nature to be considerate of the suffering of others
- Wisdom, a nature to deeply recognize the equality and possibilities of lives
- Courage, a nature to see any differences as food to awaken each other's humanity

These are based on the vision of "global citizenship," which Dr. Daisaku Ikeda presented in a lecture at Columbia University in 1996. Today, each of the faculties of Soka University is working on nurturing global citizens, including the Faculty of International Liberal Arts.

In particular, School of International Peace Studies (SIPS), which I mentioned earlier, is working to produce peace workers of a new era by teaching more professional peace studies. In graduate school education, we hope to develop research and education coordinated organically. SUPRI strives to do so by giving back its research activities and results more directly to classrooms.

I would like to finish this presentation with the hope that more people will understand Soka's peace studies based on its humanism and peace philosophy, and that the network of peace studies and education will spread further.

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5 See Soka University Web page [<https://www.soka.ac.jp/en/gcp/about/policy>]