

Synopsis of the Manuscript
Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy of Peace

Introduction

Daisaku Ikeda is the founder of the Toda Institute, and the leader of one of the most dynamic lay Buddhist organizations today, the Soka Gakkai International, which has more than 12 million members worldwide. Despite his many actions and voluminous writings for peace, including the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations, 50 volumes of published dialogues, and yearly peace proposals since 1983, Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace has never been analyzed and systematized before.

This manuscript therefore offers the first comprehensive study of Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy of Peace (DIPP) and it will surely attract the attention of the two million members of the SGI outside Japan, and of the numerous friends and admirers of Daisaku Ikeda.

The manuscript was presented on 6 March 09 at the Department of Peace Studies of the University of Bradford, and it passed the requirements for granting a PhD thesis without any changes. Advance praise for the manuscript by experts in peace studies can be found on p. 2 below. These short texts can be used as endorsements on the back cover of the book.

On p. 3 please find an abstract of the thesis, and on the following pages a summary of the chapters.

I will be ready to answer any questions you may have concerning this manuscript.

With best regards,

Olivier Urbain, Ph.D.

Director

Toda Institute

Endorsements of DIPP by Scholars of Peace Studies

"This study offers a valuable overview of Daisaku Ikeda's contribution to a philosophy of peace and compares it to that of other pioneering thinkers. It helps us advance towards a global civilization free from misery and war."

--Dietrich Fischer, Academic Director, World Peace Academy, Basel, Switzerland.

"Urbain makes an original contribution to the comparative study of peace theory with implications for global peace action."

--Glenn D. Paige, author of Nonkilling Global Political Science.

"A fascinating, learned exposé of Daisaku Ikeda's way of thinking, believing and acting for peace over a lifetime; but not only that - it highlights his dependence on peace people before him and those of his contemporaries and visionaries of his own calibre. Olivier Urbain's comparative analysis of Ikeda and Galtung is not only pioneering a field we need much more studies in, it is also highly relevant for anyone who grapples with the essential, even existential, dimension of the overarching question for us all: How to bring about individual-to-global change to save our world before it's too late. I wholeheartedly recommend this book because it tells us that there are lots of lights at the end of the tunnel we are presently in..."

--Jan Oberg, Director, Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research

"This is a timely and penetrating assessment of Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace. Though Ikeda's writings, including his dialogues and peace proposals, constitute a noteworthy contribution to the literature, they have not until now received the attention they deserve. Urbain's study admirably fills this gap. First, he draws attention to the decisive influence exerted by Nichiren's teachings and Toda's peace leadership on Ikeda's thought and practice. Secondly, he brings together in original and thought-provoking fashion Ikeda's understanding of peace and that of leading contemporary peace researchers, notably Galtung. Thirdly, and most importantly, he distils the coherence and uniqueness of what Ikeda has to say by connecting three persistent themes in his intellectual engagement, namely 'human revolution', 'dialogue', and 'global civilization'. Urbain is at his most insightful when he juxtaposes these with the contributions of 'humanistic psychology', 'communicative rationality', and 'cosmopolitan democracy'. In this profound sense Ikeda emerges as a significant synthesiser of some of the most promising leaps in contemporary human reflexivity."

--Joseph A. Camilleri, Professor of International Relations, Director, Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University.

Title: DAISAKU IKEDA'S PHILOSOPHY OF PEACE

Subtitle: Human Revolution, Dialogue and Global Civilization:
an analysis of the theory behind value-creating peace work

Author: Olivier Urbain

Copyrights: Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research

Keywords: Peace; Philosophy; Religion; Buddhism; Japan; Social Change; Human Revolution; Dialogue

Abstract:

Daisaku Ikeda is the Buddhist leader of one of the most visible religious movements today, the Soka Gakkai International (SGI). This work offers an exploration of the peace philosophy of Ikeda and its contribution to recent thinking about peace.

Daisaku Ikeda and the SGI have been the subject of several works in the fields of religious history and sociology. The focus of this research is on the significance of Ikeda's contributions in the field of peace studies, where his work has not yet been the subject of systematic investigation.

It is argued that the originality of Ikeda's philosophy of peace resides in two main elements. First, the starting point is consistently human life and its potential for peace and happiness, not the omnipresence of conflict. Second, he offers a coherent system linking the individual, dialogical and global levels, which can be represented as a triangle made of three conceptual frameworks, that of Humanistic Psychology (Human Revolution), Communicative Rationality (Dialogue) and Cosmopolitan Democracy (Global Civilization).

It is also argued that while being inspired by Ikeda's Buddhist spirituality and his loyalty to his mentor Josei Toda, this secular humanist approach to peace offers an effective and original way for all people to participate in the construction of a better world, regardless of their religious or ideological affiliation, social background or cultural practices.

Summary of Chapters

The first three chapters explore the spiritual basis of Ikeda's work, and the next three offer an analysis of his writings. The seventh chapter attempts to answer the research question, drawing on the first six chapters, by analyzing Ikeda's contribution to peace theory. The fact that Ikeda believes that the process of Human Revolution should always be the starting point of any endeavours for peace puts him on a par with many spiritual leaders and philosophers. However, the dialogical techniques and concrete visions for a Global Civilization that complement the process of Human Revolution give a realistic and practical twist to Ikeda's theory, and this combination of spiritual and pragmatic elements constitutes one of his unique contributions to peace theory.

Chapter 1 explores the basic concepts in Nichiren Buddhism, which was established in 13th century Japan, that are at the origin of and relevant for Ikeda's three main concepts. This chapter will place the 13th century Nichiren in the context of Japanese religions. In the 1930's, the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (the original name of the Soka Gakkai)'s mission was to propagate Nichiren Buddhism among educators. The mission of the Soka Gakkai after the war was to propagate Nichiren's philosophy among all Japanese people, not just educators. The mission of the SGI established in 1975 by Ikeda is to propagate Nichiren Buddhism throughout the world, and not only in Japan. The basic idea at the core of Nichiren Buddhism can be found in the Lotus Sutra, attributed to Shakyamuni, and also in its elaboration by the sixth century Chinese Buddhist scholar T'ien t'ai: each human being is endowed with wonderful and peace-promoting qualities and the purpose of Buddhist practice is to enhance these qualities. This is the fundamental principle at the core of the concept of Human Revolution.

Chapter 2 focuses on Ikeda's mentor Josei Toda. Together with his own mentor Makiguchi, Toda established the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai in 1930, was jailed by the Japanese military government in 1943 and was released in 1945. He decided to rebuild the organization and changed its name to Soka Gakkai. Under his leadership the movement became a major religious organization in Japan with 750,000 member households in 1958, the year Toda died. In 1957 Toda made a public declaration for the abolition of nuclear weapons that is one of the starting points of the SGI's peace movement. This chapter will also examine the position of Toda in the nuclear abolition movement.

Chapter 3 intends to identify factors that made Ikeda a peace worker. He was born in 1928, when Japan was resolutely on the path towards militarization and war, and he grew up during the slide of Japanese society into a state of complete militarization

dedicated to the domination of China, Korea and other Asian countries. His four brothers were drafted during the Second World War. He was too young to be sent to the front, but the testimony of one of his brothers concerning Japanese atrocities in China had a lasting effect on his life philosophy, as well as the suffering endured by his parents and people around him. His meeting with Josei Toda would determine the course of his life.

Chapter 4 analyzes the concept of “Human Revolution” based on a textual analysis of two serial novels, one of the same name, and the other entitled *The New Human Revolution*. The first serial novel, *The Human Revolution*, shows the growth of the Soka Gakkai in Japan from 1945 to about 1960 when it reached a membership of approx. one million households. The novel shows the enormous impact of the organization on the daily life of its members and on Japanese society in general. Most relevant for this thesis, it shows how the process of “Human Revolution”, one single individual deciding to effect a change in his/her own life, allows people to have a real influence on their communities and societies. A theory of “Human Revolution” is also presented, showing links with several other thinkers and writers.

The second serial novel, the *New Human Revolution*, reasserts the same message, but shows that this concept is universally applicable, and allows people of all cultural backgrounds to change their environment by changing their lives and attitudes first.

Chapter 5 uses Ikeda’s dialogues with leading world figures, to explore the philosophy and theory of Dialogue at the basis of Ikeda’s discussions. Since the art of dialogue has been developed all over the world ever since *homo sapiens* has become *homo loquens*, echoes of Ikeda’s dialogical theory can be found in thinkers such as Martin Buber, Jurgen Habermas and others, whom Ikeda himself sometimes quotes in his writings.

Chapter 6 analyzes all of Ikeda’s 26 annual Peace Proposals from 1983 to 2007, as one long-term and coherent effort to share his vision for a new Global Civilization based on interdependence, community and collaboration, a vision that includes a revitalized, impartial, effective and functional United Nations as the main forum of that new civilization. As Ikeda explains, despite all the UN’s weaknesses, there is nothing to replace it, and there is no other choice than to make it better. A close reading of all 26 proposals allows Ikeda’s vision for a future Global Civilization of interdependence to emerge, and this is the third major concept analyzed in this work.

Chapter 7 attempts to situate Ikeda’s position on a larger map of peace theory, using the theoretical framework proposed by Johan Galtung. The three main concepts at the core

of Ikeda's philosophy of peace, and their interrelatedness, offer some degree of originality. The concept of Human Revolution is at the basis of his system, and whatever happens he recommends going back to this point of departure. Then with the transformation operated within, people are more empowered to have genuine, productive and enriching Dialogues. The concept itself is unique, and contains elements that are close to Buberian, Habermatian, Buddhist and other philosophies. It is also the bridge between the Human Revolution and the development of a Global Civilization based on interdependence, community and collaboration. The similarities and differences between Galtung and Ikeda's philosophical frameworks are also explored.