

Toward a Culture of Peace

A Cosmic View

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The door is about to open on the twenty-first century, the start of the third millennium of the Common Era. Will it witness a continuation of the war and inhuman cruelty that have devastated the twentieth? Or will it truly be a new age with expansive horizons of peace and hope for the future of humanity? We stand now at a major crossroads. What kind of light can dispel the deep gloom and illumine the expanses of the next thousand years? This is a question we must ask ourselves in all earnestness.

In November 1998, as autumn deepened, I discussed this topic with the Kirghiz author Chinghiz Aitmatov in Japan's ancient capital city Kyoto. He sternly questioned the superiority of the twentieth century over the nineteenth. Nineteenth-century writers like Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Pushkin created a framework of spiritual standards that will remain valid into the twenty-first century. Mr. Aitmatov was asking whether writers of our century have equaled their achievements. Similar doubts may be entertained in connection with twentieth-century philosophers and artists.

Of course, as Mr. Aitmatov pointed out, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Pushkin never experienced the tumultuous events that determined the history of our century, events like World War II, communism, and perestroika. I was deeply impressed by what he had to say because, without bowing to the oppression of Soviet totalitarianism and through his own literary efforts, Mr. Aitmatov himself has consistently pointed out the way human beings ought to live and the path humanity must follow, issues that I have also grappled with for many years.

Undeniably, the twentieth century has benefited us greatly in the form of the many advantages of techno-scientific progress. In some instances, however, disregarding humanity, progress has launched on an arbitrary path with frequently tragic consequences.

Growing more pronounced as time passes, this tendency has stimulated increasing concern in some quarters. For example, the possibility of applying cloning technology to human

beings has triggered intensifying debate about bioethics—the nature of life and human dignity.

In these and other connections, a sternly critical examination of the extent to which so-called twentieth-century progress has actually contributed to human happiness must form a large part of our efforts to pioneer a broad path of hope into the next century. My actions are founded on the belief that this is humankind's great responsibility.

Josei Toda, my mentor and the second president of the Soka Gakkai, passionately longed to eliminate misery from the face of Earth. His fervent wish is the basis of my thought and action. During the crucial middle part of this century, Mr. Toda advocated a Buddhist humanism and instituted actions designed to stem the flow of human unhappiness. He insisted that all progress must take into consideration forecasts of conditions two hundred years in the future. At the same time, he exhorted us to use dialogue as a way of creating an enduring solidarity that embraces all of humankind.

My own efforts to discuss the most vital topics with informed and concerned people from all over the world are my response to Mr. Toda's exhortation. I am convinced that plotting a course for the coming century must entail both learning lessons from our own time and uncovering lasting spiritual treasures from the subterranean currents of history. To accomplish this, I have refused to be deterred in my efforts to enter into dialogue with representatives of all peoples on the basis of our common humanity.

The Japanese titles of many of the dialogues I have published in cooperation with leading thinkers, like the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, contain references to the twenty-first century. This choice of words reflects the kind of concern for the future Mr. Toda advocated half a century ago. For the past fifty years, I have always tried to take into consideration the state of human affairs a hundred or two hundred years in the future.

The New Isolationism

We may talk of a third millennium, but the mere change in calendar dates will not bring about a sudden change in the nature of the age. Only human will and action can create history and open up new horizons.

As we enter the new century, several problems demand our most urgent attention. In particular, economic globalization today proceeds at a furious pace. We must have the vision to orient it in such a way as to contribute to the creation of a truly rich and diverse age—a global civilization. I would like to offer some ideas about how the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) movement can contribute to and have meaning for the realization of this aim.

In this connection, I am reminded of some keen observations made by former United Nations secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali when we met in July 1998. This is how he summarized the spiritual landscape of humanity at the end of the century: In light of the globalization of financial, environmental, and health issues, domestic problems cannot be solved without addressing international ones. People must be interested, he said, not only in their own countries, but also in international conditions. They feel uneasy when confronted with the tide of internationalization, and withdraw into their own small “village” (region or state) and traditions, tending to avoid encounters with foreigners. He called this a “new isolationism.”¹

Mr. Boutros-Ghali describes the identity crisis of which many other well-informed people are aware. Unable to keep up with the ferocity and speed of globalization, people withdraw deeper and deeper inward, becoming blockaded within themselves. Buffeted by the storms of dizzying change, they desperately seek solid ground—a firm basis on which to live their lives. Surely, at the transition into a new century, this bleak spiritual landscape deserves at least as much attention as the steadily mounting accumulation of global problems. As it states in the Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution, people who want peace must first build “the defenses

of peace” in their own hearts.

Incidentally, I would like to mention two books—both philosophical fantasies—that have attained great popularity during the past few years and which address this issue. One is *Sophie’s World*, by Jostein Gaarder; the other is *Running from Safety: An Adventure of the Spirit*, by Richard Bach. Both books prominently feature young boys and girls. Their easy, non-specialized language and structure as fantasies gradually lead the reader into profound philosophical realms involving questions like “Who are you? Where does the world come from?” (*Sophie’s World*)² and “Who we are and why we’re here” (*Running from Safety*).³ Both focus closely on the themes of the basis for living and the journey in search of the self. These are fundamental philosophical themes to which, in times of identity crisis, human beings have returned time and time again ever since Socrates. Now too, at the end of the century, when we are beginning to waken from the nightmarish destruction caused by repeated ideological clashes, we are once more compelled to try to answer them.*

The Japanese Identity Crisis

Japan’s failure to deal creatively with its own identity crisis holds important lessons for the rest of the world. It is true that Japan was remarkably successful in its pursuit of modernization given its late start. In the process, however, the Japanese have all too easily thrown away their traditions. The price of success has been an ever-deepening identity crisis. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that this is how a bizarre cult like Aum Shinrikyo,[†] propounding a preposterous dogma, could have seduced so many young graduates of Japan’s best educational

* According to the calculation of Zbigniew Brzezinski, special adviser to President Jimmy Carter, during the twentieth century alone, revolutions and other wars have taken the lives of 167 million human beings.

† The Aum Shinrikyo sect has been implicated in a number of violent attacks on individuals and institutions, the most grievous being the March 1995 sarin nerve gas attack in the Tokyo subway system in which eleven people were killed.

institutes.

The search for the self is an essential human endeavor, but it must be pursued with utmost caution, as undreamed-of pitfalls may be encountered before the true self is reached.

Identity crises create a kind of vacuum, which nature is said to abhor. I am most deeply worried by the possibility that, unless the Japanese identity crisis is overcome, a new isolationism—to borrow Mr. Boutros-Ghali's term—or nationalism will rush in to fill that vacuum.

I sounded an alarm bell against resurgent Japanese nationalism some years ago. The danger has increased, at least to the extent that the magazine *Sekai* (World) published a special issue on “Grounds for a New Ultrationalism.”⁴ I am even more worried that the people fighting against the tide of nationalism fail to demonstrate a sufficiently coherent vision to oppose it.

Recent times have shown a disturbing loss of confidence in the political process and a regression of political culture witnessed by low voter turnouts, swelling numbers of people without party affiliation, and gradual reduction of support for political parties. Politics is an occupation requiring skill in the use of language. Principles and policies are the sources of its very life. But politicians today abandon these things and are concerned only with political maneuvering and short-term gain. At one time, a politician's word was his irrevocable bond. The value of that word now is in free fall. The coded pronouncements of politicians in the inner circles of Tokyo cannot possibly have the power to break the current deadlock or penetrate the darkness there and stir chords of response in the minds of the young.

It must be remembered that Japanese ultrationalism—in the horrendous form of militaristic fascism—arose during the years preceding World War II from the same kind of crisis of party politics. In the early part of the century, Taisho Democracy (named for the Taisho period, 1912–26) seemed to be making headway toward a two-party system consisting of the

Rikken Seiyukai (Constitutional Party of Political Friends) and the Minsei-to (Democratic Party). At just about that time, however, a combination of international and domestic factors, including collusion among politicians, bureaucrats, and big business and a still immature election system, caused politics to lose touch with the popular will. The people grew cynical and mistrustful of politics in general. And, in 1940, all political parties were forcibly absorbed into the government-controlled Taisei Yokusankai (Imperial Rule Assistance Association). All traces of Taisho Democracy, which had an active life of only eight years, vanished.

Recalling the oppression the Soka Gakkai suffered at the hands of the militarists, I insist that we must do everything possible to stop Japan from following that path again. Current cynicism and indifference toward politics suggest an impasse. Powerlessness and passivity must be challenged as they create the environment in which totalitarianism germinates and grows.

Obviously, it is essential that people awaken and develop strength and discerning powers of criticism and judgment. My mentor, President Toda, encouraged us to remain engaged in public affairs, and this is the basis for our ongoing grassroots endeavors to raise people's awareness.

In addition to transforming people's attitudes, there is a clear need for systemic reform, especially reform of the electoral system. For over fifty years since the end of World War II, cozy intimacy among politicians, bureaucrats, and big business has characterized Japanese politics. That arrangement is now wearing thin. In spite of the political reform slogans that have shrilled in our ears for the last five or six years, the problem has proven easier to talk about than to solve. The single issue of electoral reform has made this clear. The attempt was made, but I doubt that one person in ten thinks the post-reform situation is an improvement.[‡]

[‡] In March 1994, the Japanese Diet passed legislation replacing the multi-seat electoral district system with a mix of single-seat and proportional representation.

As a way out of the stalemate, I propose democratizing the way Japan chooses its leadership, especially the prime minister, who should speak for the whole nation. The time has come to consider either strengthening the prime minister's position and authority, as is the case with the German chancellor, or introducing direct elections for the prime minister, closer to American lines. In almost no other industrialized nation is the leading politician so powerless or replaced so often as in Japan. If this condition is allowed to persist, all attempts to restore trust in politics and politicians will be useless.

A pressing reason is the imperative need for strong leadership now, as Japan faces a period of unprecedented change.

For decades after World War II, Japan had no diplomacy to speak of. During the period 1948–54, the cabinets of Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida (1878–1967) forged a security pact with the United States under which Japan was allowed light, nonnuclear armament. Since that time, Japanese governments have been called upon to make virtually no decisive diplomatic choices. As long as vigorous American anti-Communist policies were adhered to, Japan could not go far wrong. Politicians felt no need to concern themselves with independent decisions that would determine the fate of the nation.

The collapse of the Cold War international structure invalidated this arrangement. No longer comfortable in considering only the wishes of the United States, Japan is compelled to deal with the whole world, especially near neighbors like China, Russia, the Korean Peninsula, India, and Southeast Asia. Under such circumstances, it has become impossible to guide an economic superpower, as Japan is now, without a sense of global balance and resolute decisiveness.

Nonetheless, Japan sends a new prime minister to each international summit meeting, thus hindering the development of mutual confidence with other global leaders and depriving

Japanese policies of the consistency essential to the formation of bonds of trust. Henry Kissinger once told a Japanese journalist that extensive dealings with the Japanese had taught him the difficulty of finding someone willing to make decisions and take responsibility for them.⁵

Introducing direct elections for the prime minister, for example, could break the present stalemate and give Japan popularly chosen, empowered leaders with fixed terms in office. Now is the time for this kind of bold rethinking.

Theme Park or Particularism?

Turning from the specific example of Japan, let us return to the new isolationism described by Mr. Boutros-Ghali. At its heart is an identity crisis. By overcoming that, we can achieve a globalization that moves beyond hegemonic imperatives and toward the political, social, and spiritual imperatives of the global civilization of the future.

When we met in July 1998, Mr. Boutros-Ghali emphasized to me the importance of democracy on a global scale. These ideas were included in the report “Agenda for Democracy” which he issued just prior to completing his term as UN secretary-general.

Democracy must be extended to all the nations of the world over the next twenty or thirty years, he stressed. Without an international democracy created by citizens of the world, the international order is in danger of assuming a pyramidal form, in which, even if democracy prevails at the base, anti-democracy will occupy the pinnacle.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali was correct in setting a short time limit of twenty or thirty years because the rapid pace at which globalization is proceeding already poses thorny problems.

The twentieth century began in the midst of vicious power clashes for hegemony and colonial expansion among the great powers. In *A Geography of Human Life*, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, first president of the Soka Gakkai, described these competing powers as glowering at

each other, ready unashamedly and cruelly to snatch up other people's land at the slightest opportunity.⁶ Their struggle for hegemony spawned not only two world wars, but also the Cold War, which spread the threat of nuclear confrontation over the whole world.

Owing to the frantic Cold War arms race between Eastern and Western blocs, military might escalated beyond the reaches of human control. Arms intended to annihilate an enemy menaced the very survival of their possessors and drove humanity to the brink of imminent global destruction. Human destiny hung in a perilous balance.

Though Cold War walls have now tumbled, the struggle for hegemony still rages, albeit in a different mode. The drive for global unification through military might has given way to a new struggle for economic hegemony accompanying rapidly expanding globalization, under the banner of open markets and free competition.

The law of the jungle pervades. In what has been called the "casino" of global capital markets, huge sums of money surpassing the scale of the real economy change hands every day. All this takes place beyond the regulatory reach of national governments and under the slogan of market principles.

In a recent television appearance in Japan, Lester C. Thurow, professor of management and economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, remarked that, although economic regulation by individual states is no longer feasible, the regulatory structures for a global economy are not yet in place.⁷

The current global economy has dangerous potential for instability. For example, certain aspects of the admittedly foreseeable Asian financial crisis, which started in July 1997, and of the subsequent Russian monetary crisis have already spread to other parts of the world.

The heart of the problem is not capitalism per se but indifference to both global justice and ethical standards. Can we afford to reject everything alien to market principles and, without

examination of particulars, to enforce ideas across the board in the name of global standards?

In *The Future of Capitalism*, Thurow writes: “The ideology of inclusion is withering away, to be replaced by a revival of survival-of-the-fittest capitalism.”⁸ While criticizing the social-Darwinism (survival of the fittest) of capitalism and the market economy, he insists, “If it is to succeed, the capitalism of the future will have to shift from a consumption ideology to a builder’s ideology.”⁹ I agree entirely.

At this time last year, with reference to President Makiguchi’s concept of humanitarian competition, I recommended that, instead of cut-throat competition, we should strive together to create value. In economic terms, this means a transition from a consumer economy—the mad rush for ownership and consumption—to a constructive economy—an economy where all human beings can participate in the act of creating lasting worth. Clearly, in the current financial crisis, something must be done to restrain or regulate the violent short-term shifts of capital, like those of often-pilloried hedge funds. Otherwise, we can never hope to realize what the futurist Hazel Henderson calls the “Win-Win World.”¹⁰

Setting aside the economy, what interests me as a Buddhist is how we should address the problem of identity. This is because I believe the correct identity base for a true citizen of the world must be a global—even cosmic—awareness. Inevitably, a borderless economy results in homogenization and a standardized consumer culture. But the inability of the human spirit to be satisfied with an impersonal identity as a consumer inevitably generates friction, which in turn engenders a kind of particularism—something akin to what Mr. Boutros-Ghali calls the new isolationism.

In his provocatively titled *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Benjamin R. Barber of Rutgers University describes this kind of opposition. According to him, the world today is divided into McWorld, a homogenous global theme park whose driving force is the “universalism of the profit motive (and

its accompanying politics of commodities),”¹¹ and Jihad whose driving force is the “parochialism of ethnic identity (and its accompanying politics of resentment).”¹²

I have profound doubts about the advisability of using the Islamic term *jihad* as a general synonym for particularism. For the sake of the present argument, however, I would like to adopt Professor Barber’s language, because I think it succinctly portrays two contradictory trends in our world.

The demarcations between McWorld and Jihad cannot keep each other out. As long as we look for meaning in our lives, human beings cannot be satisfied to live only in a sterile consumer world, whereas parochialism can never keep out worldwide environmental destruction or halt the tide of the global economy. We are therefore virtually fated to endure an identity crisis resulting from our inhabiting a mixture of the two.

More essentially, our world today is dominated by what Buddhism refers to as the three poisons: greed, anger and ignorance. As long as we continue wandering about in the darkness of ignorance, we will be unable to discover the light to lead us out of crisis.

World-minded citizens are indispensable to the formation of global democracy. Barber puts great hope in citizens who do not remain shut up in their own private space but actively and independently participate in public affairs. He calls the space in which they participate a “public” and writes: “The creation of a public is the task of civil society. Only there are attitudes likely to emerge that favor democracy and counter the siren song of McWorld. Only there are communities possible that answer the human need for parochial interaction in ways that remain open to inclusion and to cosmopolitan civic sentiments.”¹³

The public space—the citizens’ field of endeavor—is an intermediate zone between the government and the private sector. But, in the sterile atmosphere of contemporary urban society, developing this kind of vital linguistic space is extremely difficult. Barber offers no clear

solutions, though he finds a hint in the lively debate of the early New England town meetings which represent the ideal of American democracy.

This kind of linguistic space is the cradle of world citizens. Generating it is the foremost task of religion, especially of a world religion that would provide the core ethos for the twenty-first century. I believe that religion, when it promotes unremunerated action, represents the essence of public volunteerism. For it provides meaning, motivation, and a solid framework for that action.

As we approach the twenty-first century, the SGI has named 1999 the “Year of Victory in the Community for the New Century.” In this context, local communities are intended to be just the kind of vital linguistic space I have been talking about. Sponsored throughout Japan and around the world, lively talk-encounters can revitalize society, lead it out of its present doldrums, and foster the world citizens Mr. Boutros-Ghali insists are essential supports of global democracy.

There is no greater good than empowering humanity and revitalizing society. Like politics, economics, and education, religion is devoid of meaning unless it contributes to this process. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi identified the value of “good” with benefiting society and called this the true mission of religion. One could almost interpret the initials *SGI* as standing for, not only Soka Gakkai International, but also Social Good Institution—as I suggested to a gathering of SGI members at the Florida Nature and Culture Center in June 1996.

The good and bad religion has wrought in human history has been strictly evaluated by Bryan Wilson, reader emeritus in sociology at Oxford University and former president of the *Conférence Internationale de Sociologie des Religions*. He is a man of great erudition and impartial opinions, who fully understands the role of religion in the world and has attentively followed the development of the SGI. In our dialogue, he described the role of religion as

follows:

“If the link were ever to be made and the gulf ever bridged between, on the one hand, numerous diverse local concerns and, on the other, general, over-arching goals of global civilization and the culture(s) of all humanity, perhaps only religion would be capable of doing it.”¹⁴

I am profoundly moved and encouraged by these words, which simultaneously reflect cool analysis and passionate concern about the future of humanity.

In August 1998, Dr. Wilson contributed an article to the *Seikyo Shimbun* newspaper in which he described the Soka Gakkai International as a religion which is “in tune with the times.”¹⁵ Not remaining shut up in a purely religious framework, it expends great effort in many fields, including peace, culture, and education. He accurately describes how, in this way, the SGI movement seeks to transcend sectarianism.

Part of the mission of a religious organization like ours is to provide a place of shelter, healing, and comfort for the weary. But that is not all. Religion should also help people discover themselves anew, find liberation, reform their consciousness, and elevate their souls. Fulfilling these functions constitutes the real worth of religion in relation to reforming the times. Only then can it contribute to overcoming the identity crisis and bridging the gap between “local concerns” and the “over-arching goals of global civilization.”

Toward a New Cosmology

Although the method may seem roundabout, I suggest that for the sake of overcoming the identity crises undermining the soul of modern humanity we must attempt to discover a new cosmology. Unless we raise our sights this high, hopes of nurturing true world citizens must inevitably prove illusory.

In the European Middle Ages, people lived within the framework of a clearly defined and widely accepted cosmology. This was most eloquently portrayed in *La Divina Commedia* of Dante Alighieri. He imagined the world as consisting of the circles of the *Inferno* descending to the center of the Earth, then the mountain island of *Purgatorio*, and finally to the celestial *Paradiso*, where God dwells. Whatever the merits of the cosmology set out in Dante's masterpiece—and history showed that it could not stand up to scientific verification—it did give answers to the fundamental questions “Who are we? Where did the world come from? Why are we here?” discussed earlier. In this way it provided a framework for human identity. By cultivating a sense of divine will at work in times of happiness and unhappiness, pain and pleasure, prosperity and decline, it created a meaningful and well-ordered spiritual hierarchy in which people could live their lives.

However, the change from the Middle Ages to the modern period, it has been said, represented, not a shift from an old to a new cosmology, but the abandonment of any cosmology at all.

The modern scientific-mechanistic worldview has been built on a refusal even to address these fundamental human concerns and has thus sacrificed any pretense to being a cosmology.

Unaware of this and determined to remain so, modern humanity mistakes knowledge for wisdom and pleasure for happiness. After having run headlong down the path of modernization, we find ourselves reduced to mere consumers—the slaves of commodities. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that the crisis of human identity continues to deepen.

In *Apocalypse*, the British writer D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930) called for a renewal of cosmology, with an urgency that suggests he foresaw the conditions of our own time.

“What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with

mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen.”¹⁶

At the heart of the SGI movement is the effort to develop a new cosmology and to address the identity crisis head-on. The starting point for this undertaking is the awakening my mentor Josei Toda experienced in 1944, while imprisoned for his opposition to Japan’s war effort. Having determined on January 1 of that year to read the Lotus Sutra[§] with his whole being, he was able, through deep prayer, to experience two epiphanies, one in March and one in November.

On the first occasion, he was enlightened to the reality that what the sutras refer to as the Buddha is nothing other than life itself. On the second, he realized that he too was among the “Bodhisattvas of the Earth” described in the Lotus Sutra, who symbolize the inherent capacity for enlightened and compassionate action that exists within all people irrespective of education or social status. In the solemn gathering on Eagle Peak during which Shakyamuni expounded the Lotus Sutra, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth receive responsibility to carry on this legacy of compassion into the future regardless of the obstacles they encounter. In other words, Toda realized the gathering on Eagle Peak and the Bodhisattvas of the Earth were not just a myth, but a present reality.

The Lotus Sutra contains many dramatic scenes that have often been dismissed as mere fantasy. Josei Toda’s two realizations—especially the second one—accord perfectly with Nichiren’s^{**} own reading of the Lotus Sutra and restore it to full life as a vibrant cosmological panorama. In this connection, those awakenings represent a singular event in the spiritual history of humankind.

[§] The sutra, widely venerated in East Asia, that is said most fully to reflect Shakyamuni’s original intent of enabling all people to attain enlightenment.

^{**} The thirteenth-century Japanese Buddhist priest who, having carefully examined all of the sutras attributable to Shakyamuni, identified his true intent in the Lotus Sutra and expressed its essence in the phrase Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

While different perhaps from the facts of empirical science, they nonetheless represent experiential psychological facts and, even more importantly, a universal religious truth. We of the SGI take the drama of cosmological restoration that unfolded in Mr. Toda's heart as our starting point and as the basis of the eternal, immutable identity of the SGI movement.

This cosmology provides answers to fundamental questions inherent in our very humanity. Moreover, it provides a framework—accessible to all—for resolving the identity crisis and transforming our fin-de-siècle chaos into a world where all human beings can find meaning for their existence.

The cosmology to which Toda had awakened made so tremendous an impression on me when I—only nineteen at the time—first met him that I spontaneously expressed my feelings in the following verse.

Traveler!

where have you come from?

where are you going?

The moon has set

the sun not yet risen

in the chaos before dawn

searching for the light

I press onward

To drive back the dark clouds of the mind

I seek the great tree unshaken by the storm—

will I spring up from the great earth of life?¹⁷

Although ignorant of the deep meanings of the Lotus Sutra at the time, I nonetheless sensed the cosmic vision behind the mighty personality and life force emanating from Mr. Toda's whole being.

The essence of Mr. Toda's enlightenment can perhaps be expressed as a profound faith in the infinite worth and potential of human life coupled with a strong determination to awaken people to this. Thus, it provides the basis for the SGI's efforts to grapple with the global identity crisis.

Mr. Toda radiated astonishing magnetism and inspirational power. In the early days of our organization, we young people felt this especially strongly when he compared us to the youth of Shakyamuni's and Nichiren Daishonin's times.

All of you must realize that you share a path and goal with these splendid youths of the past. You must be determined to emulate them. Never behave in such a way as to earn criticism for slackness from Shariputra^{††} and the other bodhisattvas assembled on Eagle Peak. To do so would be unworthy of your rank as Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

Arise, young people. Do your part in the struggle!¹⁸

This call passed from one heart to the next until now millions of people from all over the world have responded to this vision.

What the Lotus Sutra describes as a Bodhisattva of the Earth is a person committed to the work of restoring a sense of cosmology to contemporary society. In concrete terms, this means being a master of the art of dialogue and a standard-bearer of soft power. The Lotus Sutra summarizes the characteristics these bodhisattvas must have as follows:

Firm in the power of will and concentration,
with constant diligence seeking wisdom,
they expound various wonderful doctrines
and their minds are without fear.¹⁹

They are clever at difficult questions and answers,
their minds know no fear.

They have firmly cultivated a persevering mind,
upright in dignity and virtue.²⁰

Fear builds barriers of aversion and discrimination in the forms of national boundaries or of exclusion and discrimination on the bases of race, religion, gender, social class, financial status, or merely personal preference. To shore up and gloss over their prejudices, people with closed minds often stereotype others. This attitude reflects a mental indolence that stops us from cultivating mutual understanding and trust or developing the perseverance and determination required to engage in dialogue. As history teaches, it is only a short step from mental laziness to violence.

In praising the Bodhisattvas of the Earth for their total lack of fear, therefore, the sutra is

^{††} One of Shakyamuni's ten major disciples; considered foremost in wisdom.

commending their efforts to transcend all discriminatory barriers and their readiness to engage in dialogue without hesitation. The tone of this dialogue is modulated to suit the moods and needs of the occasion. Sometimes, their words can be like a healing breeze, sometimes like a rousing beat, sometimes like an awakening peal, and sometimes like a sword that slashes through delusion. Their efforts at dialogue are supported by their firm conviction in the fundamental equality of all people—that all people possess the potential for enlightenment.

Another way of describing the Bodhisattvas of the Earth in contemporary terms is as the standard-bearers of soft power. This was a theme I took up in a speech entitled “The Age of Soft Power” that I gave at Harvard University in 1991.²¹ Responding, Prof. Joseph S. Nye described the quintessence of soft power as the power of cooperation. I would add that it is a profound faith in humanity that inspires the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to constantly dedicate themselves to dialogue in the effort to find common ground and harmonize different perspectives.

The following three traits summarize the character and mentality of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

To be rigorously strict toward oneself, like a sharp autumn frost.

To be warm and embracing toward others, like a soft spring breeze.

To be uncompromising when confronting evil, like a lion monarch.

Only a person embodying all three can be a master of dialogue, the importance of which has been recognized by many thinkers, like the widely respected German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883–1969). Just after the end of World War II, during the winter of 1945–46, he sparked a controversy by conducting a course of lectures at Heidelberg University which were later published as *Die Schuldfrage* (The Question of German Guilt). At the opening of the book,

Jaspers wrote: “We want to learn to talk with each other and we mutually must understand and accept one another in our extraordinary differences.”²²

As he made clear, dialogue is the key. It is also the most reliable tool with which the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, the standard-bearers of soft power, can lay firm foundations for lasting peace.

Toward a Culture of Peace

To lay the foundations for a lasting peace, we must deinstitutionalize war. We must effect a transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. With the end of the Cold War, for the time being at any rate, the threat of an all-out nuclear conflict has been averted. Unfortunately, however, local and ethnic conflicts grow in number year by year all over the world. To cite only two examples, fightings in Kosovo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have already taken high tolls in dead and wounded and have resulted in refugees numbering many tens of thousands. Mercilessly swept up in a tempest of hatred and madness, once peaceful citizens now maim and kill each other.

Through the annals of history, ordinary citizens have lamented the destruction and misery of war. The cause of that lament must not be allowed to persist into the new millennium. The time has come for humanity to raise its voice in a paean to peace and the richness of life.

Echoing a similar sentiment, the United Nations has designated 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. And in November 1998, the UN General Assembly designated the first ten years of the century the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. For some time, leading thinkers and various organizations have called for designations of this kind, including UNESCO and many of the people whom I have met in my pursuit of dialogue, such as former president of the Soviet Union Mikhail S.

Gorbachev, president of South Africa Nelson Mandela, Argentine sculptor and human-rights champion Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, and Arun Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi's grandson), founder of the M. K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence.

The resolution making this designation states: "to save future generations from the scourge of war requires transformation towards a culture of peace."²³ The designation aims to encourage the cooperative efforts of member states, the UN and its specialized agencies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) toward ensuring the happiness of children, who are always the greatest victims of war.

Nowhere is this victimization more extreme than in the case of child soldiers. According to a report issued in October 1998, by Olara Otunnu, the special representative of the secretary-general for children and armed conflict, up to 300,000 children under eighteen years of age are now serving as combatants in on-going conflicts. Every day, some eight hundred of them are killed or wounded, often by land mines. Between 1987 and 1997, two million were killed outright; another six million disabled or injured; and ten million psychologically traumatized. It is also estimated that children are suffering the effects of war in approximately fifty countries.

To quote Mr. Otunnu's report: "... in today's internecine conflicts, children are specifically targeted in strategies to eliminate the next generation of potential adversaries."²⁴ A report issued by Amnesty International in January 1999 estimates that forty-four countries enlist combatants under eighteen. Many, having already lost their families to war, have been impressed into the army and forced to fight to stay alive.

Exposure to violence affects children deeply. Forcing them into battle is a heinous violation of their rights. It perpetuates war and creates an unbreakable cycle of hatred and revenge. That is why the world community must move quickly to adopt and ratify the optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibiting the military recruitment of

anyone under eighteen.

Looking forward to the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, the SGI is determined to expand its efforts for the creation of a culture of peace through various activities in cooperation with international organizations like UNESCO and UNICEF. In addition, a series of conferences on the same topic is scheduled to begin in February at the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, an SGI-affiliated peace research institute.^{‡‡}

Transforming the culture of war requires severing the chain of vengeance. How can we accomplish this when, as is dramatized in the Aeschylus *Oresteia* trilogy, human fate appears to be an endless series of crime triggered by crime and violence triggered by violence?

In *Philosophy of Rights*, the German philosopher Georg Hegel (1770–1831) writes: “Thus revenge, as the positive action of a *particular* will, becomes *a new infringement*; because of this contradiction, it becomes part of an infinite progression and is inherited indefinitely from generation to generation.”²⁵

Hegel proceeds to show that a subsuming justice can halt the process. This must be a justice that, though capable of imposing sanction, is not vengeful.

In July 1998, at long last, there was an international agreement to create an International Criminal Court (ICC) establishing a venue for the kind of justice that can break the chain of revenge referred to above. First proposed more than half a century ago, the ICC is to be a standing court to try grievous assaults on international society such as genocide and war crimes. Whereas the International Court of Justice (ICJ) adjudicates legal disputes between and among states, the ICC is to pursue individual criminal responsibility.

International courts of the past—the Nuremberg Military Tribunal and the International

Military Tribunal for the Far East following World War II, and international criminal tribunals established by the United Nations Security Council in connection with the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda—have been ad hoc and limited in jurisdiction to specific conflicts. In addition, they have often been criticized as instances of victors' justice.

Spurred by the intensifying violence of local conflicts, the desire for a permanently standing court to cope with a broader range of crimes and criminal procedures led to the agreement to create the ICC. Its provisions place within the court's competence: (1) genocide, (2) crimes against humanity, (3) war crimes, and (4) the crime of aggression. Even acts committed in the context of internal conflicts—previously considered outside the scope of international law—may be tried as war crimes. Maximum punishment stops short of the death penalty. This is especially noteworthy because, as is demonstrated in rising worldwide opposition to its use, the death penalty is unacceptable from a humanitarian and human-rights perspective, or as a means of severing the chain of vengeance.

To be sure, there are still many details to be worked out regarding the ICC's jurisdiction, relations with the UN Security Council, and enforcement powers. Nonetheless it has great significance as a key part of the systemic framework for overcoming the culture of war on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

Unfortunately, the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is outside the current competence of the court. I sincerely hope that this issue will be reexamined to improve the court's effectiveness.

Conflict Resolution—the Power of Dialogue

Ways of resolving international problems and conflicts peacefully must be devised if we are

^{††} See the center's website www.brc21.org

successfully to break with the culture of war. Too often in the past, military intervention has been considered the only way. Recent examples include possible NATO air strikes in the conflict in Kosovo, American retaliation for terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and British and American air strikes against Iraq for refusing to permit arms inspections. Although we cannot afford to overlook problems that pose a major threat to the international community, we must always be extremely cautious in opting for military force as a solution.

In the final analysis, since they usually leave scars that continue to fester, forcibly imposed “hard power” solutions are not real solutions at all. As Hegel suggested, no matter how much we try to justify or rationalize them, as long as the opponent regards them as unfair, such measures will always lead to an intractable cycle of conflict or revenge.

Instead of resorting to hard-power solutions, we must first clarify the nature of the problem and then employ dialogue—the essence of soft power—to remove, one by one, the obstacles to solution.

Deeply battle-scarred Northern Ireland is already beginning to accept this challenge. After nearly thirty years of terrorism and bloodshed, the conflict there had come to seem irremediable. Then, in April 1998, thanks to the resolute pursuit of dialogue, an historic compromise agreement was reached. Finally, fed up with the fighting and bloodshed that had cost the lives of three thousand, voters on both sides of the border endorsed the peace accord.

The newly established North/South Ministerial Council, a real political breakthrough, undertakes cross-border efforts to develop consultation and cooperation for the entire island, both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Transcending the framework of national borders and stressing the will of the local residents, this council attempts to deal creatively with the psychology of group-identification that lies at the heart of the conflict. If it stays on track, it can provide a valuable model for resolving other regional conflicts. Indeed, its influence has already

opened the way to a cease-fire between Spain and Basque separatists.

Issues like weapons decommissioning remain. Still, as both sides become increasingly trustful of each other, the international community must support their efforts to reach agreement.

As these events in Northern Ireland have shown, even the most entrenched conflicts are not beyond resolution. The important thing is not to cast the other party in the role of enemy but to determine the nature of the problem and the cause of the disagreement. The first step toward peace is recognizing the other party's humanity.

The UN General Assembly resolution designating 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations expresses the will of the international community when it welcomes the collective endeavor "to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations on the threshold of the third millennium."²⁶

This theme is reflected in the motto of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research: "Dialogue of Civilizations for World Citizenship."^{§§} In February 2000, the Toda Institute will be holding an international conference on the topic "Dialogue of Civilizations: A New Peace Agenda for a New Millennium" to celebrate the centennial of the birth of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda after whom it is named. As founder of the institute, I am engaged in discussions with its director Prof. Majid Tehranian of the University of Hawaii in an attempt to promote dialogue between two of the world's major religious cultures, Islam and Buddhism. Professor Tehranian has written that the world today is "endowed with expanding channels of communication yet sorely in need of dialogue."²⁷ Undeniably, in our information-saturated society, we are being inundated by ready-made stereotypes obscuring the truth of people and situations. This is why person-to-person dialogue—always the basis of dialogue among civilizations—is more than ever in demand.

Even at the height of the Cold War, confident that we all share the same humanity, I worked hard to build bridges of friendship by frequently visiting the Soviet Union, China, and other communist countries. Similarly I have engaged in dialogue with people from many different religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. I am convinced that we can solve any problem as long as we keep our minds open and stand firm in our belief in our common humanity.

No one really wants war. Unfortunately, however, isolation breeds mistrust, and mistrust breeds conflict. Convinced that humanity cannot afford to isolate any country or ethnic group, I have traveled the world over and, sometimes through dialogue, sometimes through educational and cultural activities, have striven, step by step, to strengthen bonds of friendship and to build bridges of peace.

The Swiss psychologist C. G. Jung emphasized that real and fundamental change in individuals can come only from direct personal interaction.²⁸ The effort of each individual to pursue dialogue today will lead to a culture of peace and a global community of harmonious coexistence tomorrow.

Deinstitutionalizing War: Three Urgent Tasks

To make the new millennium an age of peace and hope, we must explore means of deinstitutionalizing war.

The first step in the process is to enhance and expand the network of regional forums to contribute to confidence building. By “regional forums” I am not talking about defense organizations directed against external threats, but about forums that evolve as venues for dialogue promoting trust and forestalling conflict among neighboring states.

^{§§} See the institute’s website www.toda.org

The European Union (EU) is fulfilling such a role. Europe has already experienced two global wars in this century, and the urgent desire to prevent further conflict provided important impetus for the EU project. After many ups and downs, on January 1, 1999, the long-sought goal of a common European currency was achieved. The decision of eleven EU states to introduce the euro marks a large step toward full economic integration.

In July 2002, when the switchover to the euro is scheduled to be complete, the national currencies of participating states will cease to be legal tender. For sovereign states to stop printing and minting their own money has great political as well as economic significance. When all financial policies, like the issuance of currency, are concentrated in the hands of the European Central Bank, member governments will no longer be able to raise war funds unbeknownst to their fellows.

Countries outside Europe have formed regional organizations too: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and MERCOSUR, the South American “common market.” Efforts in these regions to promote trust and contribute to stability and peace inevitably impress us with the need to create forums for regional dialogue wherever they are lacking, most notably in Northeast Asia and the Middle East.

1. A Northeast Asia Peace Community

Establishing standing forums for discussion is an effective way to prevent the outbreak of military conflict among neighboring states, which history shows constitutes the majority of wars; hence, the urgent necessity for a Northeast Asia Peace Community.

During a visit to South Korea in May 1998, I discussed the Northeast Asian problem with Dr. Young Seek Choue, chancellor and founder of Kyung Hee University, who said, “If,

after all those years of war, Europe can manage to create the EU, why can't Northeast Asia do the same kind of thing? Europe is already becoming a single state. Japan and Korea must join with China to create a single community."²⁹ As one who has long been concerned about the prospects for peace in Northeast Asia, I concur entirely with this sentiment. Dr. Choue and I agreed that Kyung Hee University and Soka University should take the initiative in carrying out this historic mission.

The most promising way to start is to encourage dialogue and exchange among the region's academic and research institutions. This is the purpose of a proposed conference to be held in 2000 on the theme of developing such partnerships for peace. Building on the experience of the Pacific Basin Symposium held biennially since 1986, I would like to call on Soka University to cooperate with Kyung Hee University in planning the project. Ideally, it will entail the support of universities and academic institutions in the Republic of Korea (South Korea), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, Mongolia, Japan, and elsewhere.

In addition to a Northeast Asia Peace Community, I would like to support similar projects in the Middle East as well. To launch this process, in March 1999, the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research is to hold the first International Commission for Security and Cooperation in West Asia (SACWA) in Istanbul. The aim of the meeting is to consider ways of devising a sustainable security structure for the Gulf region. In its planning, the Toda Institute is cooperating with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, and the Centre for Mid-East and Central Asian Studies of the Australian National University. In addition to representatives of eight Gulf littoral states—Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—specialists and policy makers from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and representatives of UN

agencies will take part.

At this forum, discussions of a regional cooperation organization, a regional non-aggression pact, and an arms control agreement are expected to have an important impact on regional stability and world peace by cultivating trust and lessening tension and the threat of war.

2. The Arms Trade

The second factor required for the deinstitutionalization of war is the reduction of the international traffic in arms.

The arms trade intensifies and protracts warfare. Lamentably, far from decreasing, the international arms trade increases year after year. According to “The Military Balance 1998/99,” the annual report of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, arms transactions rose by twelve percent in 1997. The increase was especially great in the Middle East and East Asia. Total arms transfers amounted to US\$34.6 billion in 1997. Other research confirms that areas experiencing regional conflict continue to be the major export market for the arms trade. There is even a thriving market for second-hand weapons in Africa, scene of numerous regional and internal conflicts.

In his April 1998 report “The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa,” UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed grave concern about this issue. He requested governments of member states to adopt legislation making the violation of a Security Council arms embargo a criminal offense under their national laws. In addition, he requested the Security Council to bring to light the covert operations of international arms dealers.

To profit from warfare and carnage in other countries, to use it to enhance one’s own national influence and prestige, to callously sacrifice human life for one’s private gain ... The

arms trade is evil. Murderous and morally unforgivable, it is an assault on humanity and human security. It epitomizes the worst that humanity is capable of.

When one country in a region strengthens its military might through arms imports, this heightens regional tensions and instabilities by inciting its neighbors to acquire new weapons systems of their own. Likewise, increasing supplies of arms to the factions in an internal conflict prolong and intensify the fighting.

Breaking this vicious circle requires a two-pronged approach. The first step is to reduce demand, through efforts to defuse suspicions and build mutual confidence, and the second is to block the supply of weapons flowing into conflict areas.

About half of UN member states now report arms transfers under the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms initiated in 1992. Significantly, although the system is voluntary, the major arms exporters—the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany—submit reports. As these six countries account for more than eighty-five percent of total arms transfers, their information gives a good idea of the overall situation. To further promote transparency, I propose that a treaty be negotiated that would expand this system to cover more kinds of armament and make reporting mandatory for all UN member states. If implemented, such a treaty would promote world stability by generating trust among member states and by providing an early-warning system about sudden arms buildups.

I have two other proposals to make relative to inhibiting the arms trade. First, we must restrict illicit arms transactions. As is mentioned in Secretary-General Annan's report, anyone providing arms or covert aid to conflicting parties—especially if such aid violates a UN Security Council arms embargo—should be strictly punished under national law. We should also seek consensus within the international community to expand the competence of the International Criminal Court to cover the crime of illegal arms trafficking.

Second, major arms-exporting nations should take the initiative in drawing up guidelines to limit the trade. Talks to this end that started after the Persian Gulf War of 1991 among the five permanent members of the Security Council have now broken down. To get them back on track, I suggest that a G-9 (G-8 plus China) meeting should be held this year to address this topic. I suggest using G-9 as the proper setting since it includes Germany, a major arms exporter, and because it would give Japan and Canada the chance to mediate.

Organizations such as UNICEF and various NGOs jointly urged the 1998 G-8 summit to support a UN resolution calling for a treaty restricting arms transfers. The difficulty involved in concluding a treaty only shows how important it is for the major arms exporters to draw up voluntary guidelines. Implementing these guidelines will enhance trust and encourage restraint on the part of other arms exporters.

3. Disarmament

The third key point in terms of the deinstitutionalization of war is to address the issue of disarmament and, more than anything, nuclear disarmament.

The international community has already adopted treaties and conventions banning such weapons of mass destruction as biological and chemical weapons as well as antipersonnel land mines. As of yet, however, no international disarmament regime is in place for restricting on the one hand small arms such as automatic rifles and small-caliber artillery or, on the other end of the scale, nuclear weapons.

There are too many small arms everywhere. Following up on the proposal I made last year, I again urge the creation of suitable restrictions. Some progress has been made. In December 1998, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution urging that an international conference to restrict the availability of small arms be held by 2001.

But little progress has been made in nuclear disarmament. Nearly ten years have passed since the end of the Cold War, but more than thirty thousand nuclear warheads still exist on the face of the Earth. No progress has been made either in the ratification of the American and Russian Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) or in negotiations to reduce other kinds of nuclear armament.

Since the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1995, the only additional progress has been the August 1998 decision by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiating a treaty cutting off production of weapons-grade fissile materials.

In May 1998, India and Pakistan shocked the international community by conducting nuclear tests, thereby signaling their decision to develop their own nuclear arms. In doing so, they rocked the regime founded on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to its foundations. The international community's failure to convince India and Pakistan to refrain from such testing exposes the limitations of a one-sided deterrence doctrine that can be used only by the nuclear weapons states. There is now a clear danger that other countries may rush to join the nuclear club.

The United States has recently announced its intention of using a civilian nuclear energy plant to produce tritium for the military. Tritium is one of the materials used in nuclear warheads. By taking this step, the United States has abandoned its once hard-and-fast principle of separating military from civilian uses of nuclear energy. This, it must be said, demonstrates the arrogance of nuclear weapons states and casts doubts on the sincerity of American disarmament rhetoric.

Against this background, in June 1998, eight nonnuclear states—Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa, and Sweden—issued a joint declaration calling on the five nuclear powers and nuclear-capable powers like India, Pakistan, and Israel, to take

disarmament and nonproliferation measures. These same eight nonnuclear countries submitted to the UN General Assembly a draft resolution entitled “Toward a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Time for a New Agenda,” which was adopted in December 1998. This resolution makes more concrete proposals than anything yet adopted by the UN. For example, it emphasizes the nuclear powers’ responsibilities in the area of disarmament and calls for the elimination of all nonstrategic nuclear weapons, the lifting of the state of war-readiness, and the issuance of a no-first-use pledge.

The eight countries which are often referred to as the New Agenda Coalition have renounced the possession of nuclear weapons and reliance on the defensive umbrellas of nuclear powers. For this reason, their agenda has earned the support of many other nonnuclear weapons states. In particular, Sweden, Brazil, and South Africa have the experience of having abandoned nuclear weapons development programs. The coalition’s proposal is rooted in the realistic assessment expressed in the words of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, president of Brazil: “We do not want an atomic bomb. It only generates tension and distrust in our region and it would annul the integration process which we are permanently strengthening for the well-being of our people.”³⁰

In July 1998, six South American countries—Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, and Bolivia—signed a protocol renouncing the right of belligerency within their region and outlawing weapons of mass destruction. They agreed never to resort to military force to resolve tensions such as border disputes. They renounced the possession of or research on nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and promised to expel militaristic or totalitarian states from the South American common market (MERCOSUR).

By forming “a zone of peace,” these countries are taking steps to increase trust and confidence within their region, thus reducing the temptation for any of them to go nuclear or to

place itself under the “umbrella” of a nuclear weapons state. This is in keeping with the point I made earlier when I said that generating regional trust is the surest way to halt weapons proliferation.

Nuclear free zones have been established in Latin America, the South Pacific, Africa, and Southeast Asia, demonstrating the way a growing number of regions are renouncing their reliance on nuclear weapons.

The time has come for countries like Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, and Japan, which have strongly advocated nuclear disarmament, to declare their departure from the nuclear umbrella and to support the New Agenda Coalition, which already enjoys popular support such as that which NGOs have mustered behind the Middle Powers Initiative. I believe that if popular movements and governments supportive of disarmament join together—as they did in the Ottawa Process responsible for the realization of the land-mine treaty—great strides can be made toward ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

In 1957, in his declaration against nuclear weapons, Josei Toda described them as an absolute evil that deprives humanity of its right to exist. Since that time, the Soka Gakkai has consistently worked for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In 1997 and 1998, thanks mainly to the efforts of our youth membership, we combined efforts with NGOs like the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in collecting signatures for the Abolition 2000 petition. Abolition 2000 has drafted a model nuclear weapons convention setting forth step-by-step, verifiable methods for prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons. It is my sincere hope that this draft convention, now an official United Nations document, will serve together with the proposals of the New Agenda Coalition as the basis for evolving an “Ottawa Process” for nuclear weapons abolition.

Disarmament negotiations must not be left entirely in the hands of the nuclear weapons states. It is vitally important for all such plans to reflect the popular will and the views of the

nonnuclear-weapons states. To support such efforts, the Toda Institute has conducted international conferences dealing with concrete policies and schedules for nuclear abolition.

The criticism may be advanced that no mechanism for the process can be meaningful without the participation of all the nuclear weapons powers. On the other hand, only some of the nuclear weapons powers were involved in the initial stages of formulating the non-proliferation treaty, but consistent effort eventually resulted in the participation of all five nuclear powers plus states thought to be nuclear-capable, as well as those which had tested but later renounced nuclear weapons. As this process suggests, taking the initiative in working on a treaty can encourage nuclear-weapons powers and their allies to free themselves from their dependence.

A Millennium of Harmony

The American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) wrote: “It is really a thought that built this portentous war-establishment, and a thought shall also melt it away.”³¹ If we make Josei Toda’s assertion that nuclear weapons are an absolute evil the guiding principle of our age, we shall overturn the idea that they are, as a deterrent, a necessary evil. The SGI will cooperate with other NGOs to achieve this aim and to make the twenty-first century free of nuclear arms.

To view the future as an extension of the present is passive and defeatist. The future is something we ourselves must shape and create. We must not passively wait for things to change, but must step forward and throw open the doors to the new century. We must make 1999 a historical turning point in which the people themselves rise to the challenge of ushering in a new age.

In May of this year, representatives of civil society will gather for the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference. The SGI is committed to actively supporting this people’s peace conference, notably in the areas of public information and education. Also this year, in commemoration of the

First International Peace Conference which took place at The Hague in 1899, there will be inter-government conferences in The Hague and in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

The Hague Appeal for Peace is a campaign and conference to delegitimize armed conflict and create a culture of peace for the twenty-first century. It is built around the following four thematic strands: (1) strengthening international humanitarian and human-rights laws and institutions, (2) advancing the prevention, peaceful resolution, and transformation of violent conflict, (3) developing and linking disarmament efforts, including nuclear abolition, and (4) identifying the root causes of war and developing a culture of peace.

As one who has long called for a global conference renouncing war and the adoption of a Declaration for the Renunciation of War, I have tremendous expectations for the Hague Appeal for Peace and for the Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century that is to be finalized and adopted. I am confident that this will be a powerful and eloquent expression of the universal human desire to live free from the threat of war and will serve as a universal renunciation of war. I hope and expect that the UN General Assembly will promptly adopt this agenda as a concrete program of action toward the realization of a world without war. The international community should vigorously implement this through, among other things, the Fourth Special Session on Disarmament scheduled for 2001.

Another significant project, and one the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century has supported in a variety of ways, is drafting the Earth Charter to be presented for deliberation by the Millennium NGO Forum at the UN in 2000. Many people hope that, in 2002, ten years after the Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the UN General Assembly will adopt the Earth Charter.

These two movements—to renounce war and to establish a charter for our planet—are expressions of global solidarity and the pooling of human wisdom. With these as our guides, we

must make the twenty-first century an era free from nuclear weapons, the start of a new millennium of harmony and peaceful coexistence founded on respect for the sanctity of life. We can and must create a global civil society that is truly of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Courage and hope are essential; we must never lose these vitally human qualities. Each of us must awaken to our unique mission as protagonists in the transformation of history. And we must unite in a shared human struggle to confront and resolve the pressing problems facing our planet.

Joining efforts with people of goodwill everywhere, the members of the SGI are determined to forge a great path that people one hundred, two hundred, or even a thousand years hence will be able to tread with surety and serenity. We must lay it well, confidently accepting the great challenges at hand, our eyes trained on the towering peaks of the new millennium.

¹ The dialogue was covered in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, July 30, 1998.

² Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy*, trans. Paulette Moller (London: Orion Books Ltd., 1995), p. 8.

³ Richard Bach, *Running from Safety: An Adventure of the Spirit* (New York: Bantam Double Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1994), p. ix.

⁴ *Sekai*, December, 1998 issue.

⁵ Yoshiki Hidaka, *Nihonkoku ni daitoryo ga tanjo suru hi* (When Japan Has a President) (Tokyo: Shuei-sha, 1998), p. 214.

⁶ Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo zenshu* (The Complete Works of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi), vol.1 (Tokyo: Daisan Bunmei-sha, 1983), pp. 14–15.

⁷ “Shihonshugi wa doko e yuku no ka?” (Where Is Capitalism Headed?), NHK, January 1, 1999.

⁸ Lester C. Thurow, *The Future of Capitalism: How Today's Economic Forces Shape Tomorrow's World* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1996), p. 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

¹⁰ Hazel Henderson, *Building a Win-Win World: Life Beyond Global Economic Warfare* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publications, 1997).

¹¹ Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), pp. 219–20.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 222.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

¹⁴ Bryan Wilson and Daisaku Ikeda, *Human Values in a Changing World: A Dialogue on the Social Role of Religion* (New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, 1984), p. 179.

¹⁵ Bryan Wilson, contributed text, *Seikyo Shimbun*, August 24, 1998.

¹⁶ D. H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931), p. 104.

¹⁷ Daisaku Ikeda, *Songs from My Heart*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Weatherhill, Inc., 1978), p. 65.

¹⁸ Josei Toda, *Toda Josei zenshu* (The Complete Works of Josei Toda), vol.1 (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbun-sha), pp. 58–59.

¹⁹ *The Lotus Sutra*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 220.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

²¹ Daisaku Ikeda, *A New Humanism: The University Addresses of Daisaku Ikeda* (New York: Weatherhill, Inc., 1996), pp. 203–12.

²² Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Capricorn Books, 1960), p. 11.

²³ A/53/25 19 November 1998.

²⁴ “Malnutrition claims lives of 7 million children a year, Third Committee told,” M2 Presswire, October 23, 1998, M2 Communications Ltd.

²⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Rights*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 130.

²⁶ A/RES/53/22, 16 November 1998.

²⁷ Majid Tehranian and Daisaku Ikeda, “Nijuisseki e no sentaku” (Choices for the Twenty-first Century), *Ushio*, October 1998 issue.

²⁸ C. G. Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Mentor Books, 1959), pp. 40–41.

²⁹ The dialogue was covered in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, May 21, 1998.

³⁰ Excerpt from a report by the Brazilian news agency Estado, July 13, 1998.

³¹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Complete Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. II (New York: WM. H. Wise & Co., 1929), p. 1129.