

PEACE: CHALLENGE OF NUCLEAR ABOLITION

“Crying out in opposition to war and nuclear weapons is neither emotionalism nor self-pity. It is the highest expression of human reason based on an unflinching perception of the dignity of life. Faced with the horrifying facts of nuclear proliferation, we must call forth the power of hope from within the depths of each individual’s life. This is the power that can transform even the most intractable reality. It is absolutely essential for the world’s people to tenaciously cry in a common voice for an end to this terrible madness of destruction.”

The peace activism of Daisaku Ikeda is inspired by the Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons issued on September 8, 1957, by Josei Toda, second president of the Soka Gakkai, in which he denounced nuclear weapons as an absolute evil and entrusted the task of abolishing them as the foremost of his instructions to his young followers.

Since 1960, Ikeda has traveled throughout the world and met with leaders of the five declared nuclear-weapon states, secretaries-general and other officials of the United Nations, as well as numerous activists, scholars and intellectuals. The elimination of nuclear arms and the realization of global peace has been a consistent theme he has raised in these meetings.

He wrote proposals on the occasion of the three UN General Assembly Special Sessions on Disarmament (1978, 1982 and 1988) in the hope of contributing to their success. Since 1983, he has authored a peace proposal, released every year on January 26 to commemorate the founding of Soka Gakkai International, in which nuclear abolition has been an abiding concern. In 1996, he established the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, which positions the abolition of nuclear weapons as a foundational objective, organizing conferences and publishing proceedings on this theme.

He has stressed the importance of establishing a clear international norm for nuclear abolition and of bringing together the power of ordinary citizens to this end. This is based on his belief that civil society has a special role to play in resolving issues that involve the complex interplay of national interests and are therefore not amenable to resolution solely through state or government initiatives. Inspired by his body of work, SGI (as a movement of ordinary citizens) has engaged in an extensive range of activities to convey to as wide a public audience as possible the inhuman nature of and the danger posed by nuclear weapons.

One example is “Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World,” an exhibition launched in June 1982 in support of the United Nations World Disarmament Campaign and shown in numerous countries, including nuclear-weapon states such as the former Soviet Union, United States and China. In recent years, SGI has engaged in activities that seek to promote public awareness in support of disarmament and nonproliferation education as called for by the UN. In 1997 and 1998, SGI members collected 13 million signatures for the Abolition 2000 campaign, presenting these to the UN in October 1998.

In a proposal on UN reform written in August 2006, Ikeda called for a People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition.

In September 2007, on the 50th anniversary of Toda's declaration, SGI launched the Decade with a new exhibition that challenges the logic of nuclear weapons from the perspective of human security. Since then, the exhibition "From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Transforming the Human Spirit" has been viewed in numerous venues around the world. Toward the same end, SGI has produced as an educational tool a five-language DVD documenting the experiences of atomic bomb survivors, "Testimonies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Women Speak Out for Peace." SGI is collaborating with other organizations in these efforts and supports the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) initiated by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW).

On September 8, 2009, Ikeda formulated a five-point plan for the abolition of nuclear weapons in his proposal "Building Global Solidarity Toward Nuclear Abolition," in which he offered the following caveat:

"If we are to put the era of nuclear terror behind us, we must struggle against the real 'enemy.' That enemy is not nuclear weapons per se, nor is it the states that possess or develop them. The real enemy that we must confront is the ways of thinking that justify nuclear weapons; the readiness to annihilate others when they are seen as a threat or as a hindrance to the realization of our objectives."