

## DAISAKU IKEDA AS A WRITER

“Still in my teens when World War II ended in Japan’s utter defeat, I devoured books on philosophy trying to understand the upheaval, the anguish, the suffering—the insanity—of the times. I began to keep a diary and notebooks, jotting down ideas and reflections, mostly disjointed phrases and fragments of thoughts.”

Daisaku Ikeda developed a voracious hunger for literature and philosophy, and his interpretations of Buddhism are enhanced by his understanding of the works of writers such as Victor Hugo, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Leo Tolstoy and Walt Whitman.

He has conducted dialogues with cultural figures from many countries and traditions, from violinist Yehudi Menuhin to novelists Chingiz Aitmatov and André Malraux, poets Thiago de Mello and Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali, and architect, sculptor and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel.

Ikeda is a prolific author of some 100 books, ranging from discussions on Buddhism to children’s stories, poetry and essays. His best-known work, the multivolume *The Human Revolution*, is a novelized historical account of the development and growth of the Soka Gakkai Buddhist movement, and a best-seller in Japan.

Ikeda writes poetry in the traditional Japanese forms of *haiku* and *waka* as well as longer poems that often incorporate a narrative voice. He often writes poetry to encourage people known to him. He says, “To me the sole purpose of poetry is to give courage.” An English-language volume of his antiwar poems, *Fighting for Peace*, was a finalist in the U.S.-based Publishers Marketing Association’s 2005 Benjamin Franklin Awards. He was named poet laureate by the World Academy of Arts and Culture and is a nonresident member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters.

Ikeda’s children’s stories have been translated into many languages and introduced to the world through the talents of illustrator Brian Wildsmith. Several have been made into animated films and lauded for their positive influence on young viewers. A series of his animated stories won the 2005 Anak TV Broadcasters’ Award from the Philippine-based Southeast Asian Foundation for Children’s Television.

Ikeda is also an accomplished photographer and has published several volumes of photographs accompanied by poetry. Exhibitions of his photography under the title “Dialogue with Nature” have been held in various countries.