



Profile of

**Daisaku Ikeda**  
(1928–2023)

April 2026





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## 1. SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

*“In the end, peace will not be realized by politicians signing treaties. True and lasting peace will only be realized by forging life-to-life bonds of trust and friendship among the world’s people. Human solidarity is built by opening our hearts to each other. This is the power of dialogue.”<sup>1</sup>*

Daisaku Ikeda (1928–2023) dedicated his life to strengthening the foundations of a lasting culture of peace.

He engaged in persistent citizen diplomacy in order to break down walls of mistrust, authored annual peace proposals suggesting ways of resolving global problems and tirelessly called for the abolition of nuclear weapons. As well as founding substantial institutions promoting peace, humanistic education and cultural exchange, he met with key leaders, cultural figures and scholars from every region of the world to discuss ways of resolving the common challenges facing humanity. He also published dialogues probing the crucial issues of our time with over 70 such individuals.

Ikeda was third president of the Soka Gakkai, a global community-based Buddhist organization that promotes peace, culture and education centered on respect for the dignity of life. He was also founding president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI). Ikeda’s engagement was sustained by his belief in the dignity and supreme value of life and the creative potential of every individual. [[www.sokaglobal.org](http://www.sokaglobal.org)]

Ikeda’s commitment to peace stemmed from his experience as a young teenager during World War II, which led him to develop a strong aversion to war and the conviction that nuclear weapons are an absolute evil.

He was particularly dedicated to the abolition of nuclear weapons. In 1975 and 1998, he initiated campaigns that gathered over 10 million signatures for nuclear abolition, and he submitted proposals to the three UN General Assembly Special Sessions on Disarmament in 1978, 1982 and 1988. He continued to explore viable routes toward nuclear abolition in his 40 annual peace proposals, published between 1983 and 2022.

In 1982, Ikeda proposed the creation of the exhibition “Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World,” which was first shown at United Nations Headquarters in New York before touring internationally, including nuclear-weapon states such as the former Soviet Union, China, the United States and France, and viewed by 1.2 million visitors. In 2007, he initiated the ‘People’s Decade for Nuclear Abolition’ campaign.

At his suggestion, the Soka Gakkai supported refugee relief efforts through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). From 1973–2001, with the rise in displaced persons in Asia and Africa, Soka Gakkai youth in Japan led 21 donation collection campaigns in support of refugee relief, collecting some 1.4 billion yen that was donated to the UNHCR. Representatives also visited refugee camps in some 15 locations.

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, “Our Power for Peace,” in *Hope in a Dark Time*, David Krieger, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: Capra Press, 2003), p. 93.

For his leadership of such efforts, Ikeda received the UN Peace Medal in 1983 and the UNHCR Humanitarian Award in 1989.

In 2002 and 2012, coinciding with the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Rio+20 Conference, respectively, he published proposals for the promotion of education for sustainable development. Further, he addressed human rights and humanitarian issues in his annual peace proposals and inspired public education initiatives on these themes. Such civil society initiatives include exhibitions, videos, lectures and seminars, often in collaboration with UN agencies and like-minded NGOs.

A further facet of his engagement was his effort to build trust and foster cultural exchange in contexts of historical division and conflict. In particular, he worked to heal relations between Japan and its Asian neighbors based on an honest view of history, recognizing and offering his own apologies for the suffering caused by Japan's wartime aggression. He also made great efforts to convey to young people the horror and futility of war.

Ikeda's desire to ensure the stability of Asia led him to reach out to China when the country was isolated, calling for normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan in 1968. Then, in 1974, when Sino-Russian tensions escalated into a threat of military confrontation, he traveled to meet and engage in dialogue with the leaders of those countries as a private citizen, contributing to de-escalation.

Ikeda engaged in discussion with thousands of individuals—leading figures from around the world in the humanities, politics, economics, sciences, culture, religion and the arts—on fundamental issues confronting humanity, from conflict to environmental degradation, the role of religion and social change. His dialogue partners included Arnold J. Toynbee, Aurelio Peccei, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Joseph Rotblat, Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachev, Wangari Maathai and Rosa Parks.

He also founded institutions dedicated to building bridges of trust between the peoples of the world, in the belief that such people-to-people ties cultivate respect for diversity and enable us to reaffirm our common humanity, thus contributing to laying the foundations of peace. These include the Min-On Concert Association (music and cultural exchange), the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, the Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and Dialogue, the Toda Peace Institute and the Soka Amazon Institute in Brazil. Ikeda also founded the Soka Schools systems in Japan and Brazil, Soka University in Japan, Soka University of America, Soka kindergartens in six countries, and the Soka International School Malaysia in 2023.

Many of Ikeda's initiatives promoted the ideal of global citizenship—an ethic of social responsibility rooted in Buddhist values of compassion and working for the happiness of others—and he directed his energies toward encouraging youth to take the lead in establishing a more hopeful and positive direction for global society.



## 2. BIOGRAPHY

Daisaku Ikeda was a peacebuilder, Buddhist philosopher, educator, author and poet. He was president of the Soka Gakkai community-based Buddhist organization in Japan from 1960–79 and is considered one of three founding presidents, together with his predecessors, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda. He was the founding president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), promoting a philosophy of empowerment and social engagement for peace.

Ikeda was born in Tokyo, Japan, on January 2, 1928, the fifth son of a large family engaged in seaweed farming. Growing up during World War II, he endured firsthand the suffering and devastation of war, including the death of his eldest brother who was killed in action in Burma (present-day Myanmar). These experiences during his teenage years gave birth to a lifelong passion to work for peace and root out the fundamental causes of human conflict.

In 1947, at the age of 19, he encountered Buddhism through a meeting with Josei Toda (1900–58), educator, pacifist and leader of the Soka Gakkai. Toda had been imprisoned during the war together with his mentor Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944). Both had held firm to their religious convictions in the face of oppression by the military authorities who imposed State Shinto ideology on the population as a means of sanctifying their war of aggression, and Makiguchi had died in prison. Toda's resolve to stand up to the militarist regime impressed Ikeda, who would later write, "The words of a person who had suffered imprisonment for his convictions carried a special weight. I felt intuitively that I could trust him."<sup>1</sup>

Toda was engaged in the process of rebuilding the Soka Gakkai, which he had founded with his mentor and fellow educator, Makiguchi, and which had been all but destroyed as a result of wartime persecution. Ikeda shared Toda's conviction that the philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism, with its focus on the limitless potential of the individual human being, could help revive society in the devastation of post-war Japan. This process of inner-directed personal transformation allows each individual to take responsibility for their own life and achieve happiness while at the same time positively influencing their immediate environment and community.

Although Ikeda's association with Toda lasted only 10 years, he described his mentorship by Toda as the defining experience of his life and the source of everything he achieved.

In May 1960, two years after Toda's death, Ikeda, then 32, succeeded him as president of the Soka Gakkai. In 1975, he became the founding president of the SGI. Ikeda wrote, "Everything depends on the people. That is why it is vital to forge a growing network that brings people of goodwill and conscience together."<sup>2</sup> Under his leadership the movement began an era of innovation and expansion, becoming actively engaged in initiatives promoting peace, culture, human rights, sustainability and education worldwide.

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, "Planting Seeds of Hope in Japan's Youth," *The Japan Times*, June 8, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, "Zuihitsu 'Shin-ningenkakumei,' 69 *To'o Roshia ni mebuku myoho no tane*" (Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*: 69, The Seeds of the Mystic Law Sprouting in Russia and Eastern Europe), *Seikyo Shimbun*, February 18, 2005, pp. 2–3.

The central tenet of Ikeda's thought, grounded in Buddhist humanism, was the fundamental dignity of life, a value he saw as the key to lasting peace and human happiness. In his view, global peace relies ultimately on a self-directed transformation within the life of the individual, rather than on societal or structural reforms alone.

This conviction was expressed most succinctly in the preface of *The Human Revolution*, Ikeda's novelization of the Soka Gakkai's history and ideals: "A great inner revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation and, further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind."<sup>3</sup>

Ikeda was a prolific writer whose works range from Buddhism to essays, poetry and children's stories. Some 250 of his books have been translated into more than 50 languages overall.

He had three sons (one who predeceased him), and is survived by his wife, Kaneko, and his sons, Hiromasa and Takahiro.

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<sup>3</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, *The Human Revolution*, vol. 1 (Santa Monica, CA: World Tribune Press, 2004), p. viii.



Daisaku Ikeda as a young man  
(Tokyo, 1947)



Daisaku Ikeda (left) with his mentor,  
Josei Toda (1958)



Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda (Nagano,  
Japan, 2003)

### 3.1 PEACEBUILDER: Challenge of Nuclear Abolition

*“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.”<sup>1</sup>*

The origin of Ikeda’s commitment to nuclear abolition can be traced to September 8, 1957, and a speech by his mentor, second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda, denouncing nuclear weapons as an affront to humanity and an embodiment of the darkest aspects of the human heart. Toda made his “Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons” during the Cold War, at a time of fierce competition between the superpowers to enhance the destructiveness of nuclear technology. He appealed to youth to take up the challenge of ridding the world of these weapons.

In 1975, to mark the founding of the SGI, Ikeda delivered to the UN Headquarters 10 million signatures collected by the Soka Gakkai youth division in Japan calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. He presented them directly to the UN Secretary-General.

Ikeda contributed proposals outlining concrete steps toward nuclear disarmament on the occasions of the UN General Assembly Special Sessions on Disarmament in 1978, 1982 and 1988.

Between 1983 and 2022, he authored 40 annual peace proposals in which the abolition of nuclear weapons was a central focus. In these, he consistently stressed the importance of establishing an international convention or treaty for nuclear abolition and of galvanizing the power of ordinary citizens to this end. In 2017, Ikeda welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Under Ikeda’s leadership, the organization undertook numerous awareness-raising activities. The first in a series of educational exhibitions “Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World” was launched in June 1982 at UN Headquarters in New York, and the subsequent exhibition “Nuclear Arms: Threat to Humanity,” launched in June 1996 in San José, Costa Rica, toured 39 cities in 24 countries, including showings in several nuclear-weapon states.

From 1997 to 1998, Soka Gakkai members collected 13 million signatures for the Abolition 2000 campaign led by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, presenting these to the UN in October 1998. In 2014, they gathered more than 5 million signatures in support of the “Nuclear Zero” petition, a global campaign calling for a world free of nuclear weapons.

In 2007, following a proposal by Ikeda, SGI launched the “People’s Decade for Nuclear Abolition” campaign in collaboration with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and other groups, aiming to help build a global grassroots network of people dedicated to abolishing nuclear weapons. This was followed by the Second Decade starting from 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, *Building Global Solidarity Toward Nuclear Abolition* (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 2009), p. 5.

As part of the People's Decade campaign, the exhibition "From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Toward a World Free From Nuclear Weapons" was launched in 2007 and viewed in more than 230 cities in 32 countries. The current exhibition "Everything You Treasure—For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons," which seeks to empower people to take action for change, was created by the SGI with the support of ICAN and launched in 2012; it has been shown in more than 90 cities in 21 countries. Another collaborative project with ICAN is a digital tool to learn about the TPNW.

The Soka Gakkai also developed other educational tools, including a five-language DVD documenting the experiences of atomic bomb survivors, *Testimonies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Women Speak Out for Peace* and the book *Hiroshima and Nagasaki: That We Never Forget* containing over 50 firsthand testimonies of hibakusha.

The SGI has joined with other faith groups to raise public awareness about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and their moral and ethical dimensions. As part of these efforts, the SGI contributed to the issuing of a series of interfaith statements calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons that were presented to major conferences and meetings.

In August 2015, marking the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and based on a proposal by Ikeda, 30 youth activists and experts on nuclear disarmament from 23 countries gathered in Hiroshima for the International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition, co-organized by the SGI, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, ICAN, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, PAX and Mines Action Canada. The UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, joined the event and formally accepted a "Youth Pledge" drawn up by the participants.

Ikeda strongly believed that it is only the power and passion of youth that will enable humanity to rid itself of these deadly weapons on which so many resources are wasted, and which constitute the peak of a pyramid of violence in our world.

In light of rising international tensions, in 2022 and 2023, Ikeda issued several statements calling for undertakings of No First Use of nuclear weapons.

### 3.2 PEACEBUILDER: Citizen Diplomacy and Dialogue

*“Precisely because I am a private citizen, I can act without the restrictions of profit, position or policy. My only position is that of an ordinary human being, and it is in that role that I hoped, in some small way, to bring together and consolidate the will for peace into a global commitment.”*<sup>1</sup>

As a concerned individual motivated by his belief in our shared humanity, Daisaku Ikeda contributed to building trust and human connections across historical divides created by the wounds of war or differences of ideology. He made particular efforts to heal relations between Japan and its neighbors in Asia, often offering his own apologies for the suffering wrought by Japan’s wartime aggression. Two examples are illustrative of the efforts in citizen diplomacy to which he devoted much of his life.

#### ❖China–Japan Friendship❖

In 1968, as president of the Soka Gakkai, Ikeda made an impassioned speech calling for the normalization of Sino–Japanese relations at a gathering of 20,000 youth in Tokyo. At the time, China was isolated from the international community and excluded from the United Nations, and there were widespread anti-Chinese and anti-communist sentiments in Japan. Despite criticism and threats following his speech, Ikeda continued to work to mend ties between China and Japan, convinced that ending the isolation of China was key to stability and peace in Asia.

Ikeda’s proposal caught the attention of other individuals supporting the normalization of Sino–Japanese relations, including Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. An outcome of this was a visit to China by representatives of the Komeito<sup>2</sup> political party. Thus, a chain of events was set in motion that culminated in the restoration of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1972.

In December 1974, Ikeda visited China himself and met with Premier Zhou. The Chinese leader was hospitalized with a terminal illness at the time but insisted on meeting him. During their meeting, the 76-year-old premier urged Ikeda to continue in his efforts to pave a path of lasting Sino–Japanese friendship for the sake of peace in Asia.

Ikeda pledged to do his utmost to reestablish friendship between the two countries, which had enjoyed close ties over thousands of years prior to the war. He subsequently visited China 10 times and initiated extensive programs of youth, cultural and educational exchange stretching over four decades.

In recognition of his efforts, Ikeda was awarded over 120 academic honors by universities in China.

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, “*Sekai no shidosha to kataru: 3, Kosygin shusho* (Recollections of My Meetings with Leading World Figures: 3, Aleksei N. Kosygin, Former Premier of the Soviet Union).” *Seikyo Shimbun*, September 15, 1996, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ikeda founded the Komeito in 1964 with the aim of bringing the values of compassion and respect for life into Japanese politics and ensuring representation of the concerns of ordinary citizens. The relationship between the Soka Gakkai and the Komei party in Japan today is that of an independent political party and its main support base. [See “Founding the Komei Party,” [www.daisakuikeda.org/main/profile/bio/bio-10.html](http://www.daisakuikeda.org/main/profile/bio/bio-10.html)].

“I am always touched by the warm humanity of the people of China, which I regard as my spiritual home. There is a saying in your country: ‘When mingling with people, mingle with their hearts. When watering trees, water the roots.’ In the same way, the flower of friendship blossoms when attention is given to profound heart-to-heart ties—not merely to outward appearances of formality or etiquette.”<sup>3</sup>

### ❖ Contributing to Sino–Soviet Relations ❖

The 1970s were a time of deep divisions between the superpowers, with the threat of nuclear annihilation hanging over humanity. In 1974, Sino–Soviet tensions had escalated to the point of looming military confrontation. On a visit to China earlier that year, Ikeda had witnessed the Chinese people’s fear of a Soviet attack. In September he made his first visit to the Soviet Union at the invitation of Moscow State University and met with Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin.

During the meeting, Ikeda forthrightly broached the topic of tensions between the two countries and asked Kosygin whether the Soviet Union was intending to attack China. With Kosygin’s permission, Ikeda later conveyed to the Chinese leadership the premier’s assurances that the Soviet Union had no intention of either attacking or isolating China, which contributed to the easing of tensions between the two countries.

“People criticized me, asking why a person of religion would want to visit a communist country. But I was determined to open that road. Together, we have transformed suspicion into trust, and fear into friendship. I wanted to transform a fixation with the past into a commitment to the future.”<sup>4</sup>

### ❖ Dialogue ❖

Ikeda’s belief in dialogue was based on a deep faith in humanity and a pragmatic recognition of the fact that violence can never produce lasting positive change. Ikeda held thousands of dialogues and discussions with individuals from diverse backgrounds—prominent figures from around the world in the humanities, politics, economics, sciences, faith traditions, culture and the arts—in order to discover common ground and identify ways of tackling the complex problems facing humanity. His dialogue partners included Nobel Peace Prize laureate Joseph Rotblat, Peace Studies pioneer Elise Boulding, Brazilian human rights activist Austregésilo de Athayde and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Over 70 of these dialogues have now been published in various languages.

His first widely published dialogue, *Choose Life*, is the record of discussions with British historian Arnold J. Toynbee held in 1972 and 1973, spanning issues such as war and peace, the death penalty and euthanasia, and the role of religion in society. *Choose Life* has now been translated into more than 30 languages.

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<sup>3</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, from a speech at a banquet during a trip to Beijing, China, on May 31, 1990, attended by 300 guests including Chinese Vice President Wang Zhen, President Han Xu of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and President Sun Pinghua of the China–Japan Friendship Association.

<sup>4</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, “*Hokkaido kenshu dojo (bekkai) de meiyō-kaicho no katarai (jo)*” (Honorary president’s speech at a meeting of representative members at the Hokkaido Training Center in Bekkai, Hokkaido), *Seikyo Shimbun*, August 19, 1994, p. 3.

### 3.3 PEACEBUILDER: Civil Society Leadership and Support for the UN

#### ❖ Civil Society Leadership ❖

*“Peace is not some abstract concept far removed from our everyday lives. It is a question of how each one of us plants and cultivates the seeds of peace in the reality of daily living, in the depths of our being, throughout our lives. I am certain that herein lies the most reliable path to lasting peace.”<sup>1</sup>*

In 1975, Ikeda became founding president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI). Since 1983, the SGI, as a nongovernmental organization has been in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Viewing Buddhism as a practical philosophy with a strong ethos of social engagement, Ikeda fostered among Soka Gakkai members a sense of responsibility regarding global and social issues. More than simply carrying out a particular religious practice, they see their mission as one of bringing Buddhist wisdom to bear on the task of resolving the problems confronting the world, and of building grassroots solidarity for peace. As an NGO, the SGI is active in public awareness-raising focusing on peace, disarmament, human rights education, sustainable development and climate change, gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as humanitarian relief.

#### ❖ Support for the United Nations ❖

*“Humanity faces a range of complex issues that show no regard for national borders—threats such as terrorism, armed conflict, poverty, environmental degradation, hunger and disease. A reformed and strengthened UN is essential to mustering effective responses to the global challenges of the new era.”<sup>2</sup>*

The UN, in Ikeda’s view, plays a vital role as a parliament of humanity, creating peace and global solidarity. He was vocal in his calls for support for the world body for several decades. From his inauguration as third president of the Soka Gakkai in 1960, he engaged in dialogue with world leaders to develop a greater support base for the UN and offered ideas for tackling problems confronting the international community. Between 1983 and 2022, he also contributed philosophical and practical suggestions in his 40 annual peace proposals.

Ikeda held dialogues with several UN Secretaries-General, and he was a recipient of the UN Peace Medal and the UNHCR Humanitarian Award.

In 1966 Ikeda made a proposal for an immediate ceasefire in the Vietnam War; in 1968 he called for the normalization of Sino–Japanese diplomatic relations; in 1973 he made a proposal for an Educational UN; in 1974 he proposed the establishment of a World Food Bank; and in 1978 an Environmental UN. In the same year, he submitted a proposal with a 10-step plan toward nuclear disarmament to the First UN Special Session on Disarmament.

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, *2004 Peace Proposal—Inner Transformation: Creating a Global Groundswell for Peace* (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai), p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, *2006 Peace Proposal—A New Era of the People: Forging a Global Network of Robust Individuals* (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai), p. 28.

Responding to Ikeda's promotion of education for sustainable development to help resolve interlinked issues of the environment, poverty, human rights and peace, in 2002, the SGI put forward an idea for a UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in consultation with other NGOs in Japan on the occasion of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD). This proposal was eventually adopted by the 57th UN General Assembly, and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development began in 2005.

Ikeda also called for a global framework for human rights education to continue after the UN Decade for Human Rights Education in a message to the 2001 World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa. Representatives of the SGI and other NGOs then contributed to the process of the establishment of the World Programme for Human Rights Education that started in 2005, and to the adoption by the Human Rights Council of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training in 2011.

Ikeda advocated regular summit meetings between the leaders of China, South Korea and Japan for the sake of peace and stability in Northeast Asia, proposing initiatives in areas where cooperation was deemed relatively feasible, such as environmental conservation and disaster prevention. Several such ideas were taken up and became a reality.

In August 2006, he met with UN Under-Secretary-General Anwarul K. Chowdhury and presented a proposal for UN reform, offering his thoughts on the mission of the world body and ways to strengthen it. [[Link to 2006 UN proposal](#)]

Ikeda's annual peace proposals provide a focus for the peace activities undertaken by Soka Gakkai and SGI organizations around the world. Large-scale awareness-raising exhibitions on themes such as nuclear disarmament, building a culture of peace, sustainable development and human rights education have been an important focus of these activities.

In addition to promoting efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons, centered on the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), Ikeda also expressed concern about increasing autonomy in weapons systems in his peace proposals. Since 2018, the SGI has been a member of the Stop Killer Robots coalition, and coproduced awareness-raising materials on the related issue of digital dehumanization.

Another key theme in the proposals was promoting human dignity as embodied in the phrase in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, "to leave no one behind," and building caring, inclusive societies based around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"More than anything, it is the depth and intensity of the commitment and pledge that lives in the hearts of the younger generation that will transform the world from one where nuclear weapons threaten the lives and dignity of people to one in which all people can live in peace and fully manifest their inherent dignity. . . . We will continue to work for a world, a global society, in which no one is left behind."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, *2016 Peace Proposal—Universal Respect for Human Dignity: The Great Path to Peace* (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai), p. 57.

### 3.4 PEACEBUILDER: Promoting an Ethos of Global Citizenship

*“The work of fostering global citizens, laying the conceptual and ethical foundations of global citizenship, concerns us all. It is a vital project in which we all are participants and for which we all share responsibility. To be meaningful, education for global citizenship should be undertaken as an integral part of daily life in our local communities.”<sup>1</sup>*

Ikeda consistently emphasized the importance of education for global citizenship in the dialogues he conducted with leading figures from around the world, beginning with his discussions with British historian Dr. Arnold J. Toynbee in the early 1970s.

In June 1996, he delivered a lecture “Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship” at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York, in which he characterized global citizenship in terms of the following human qualities that can be developed even by those who have never traveled abroad:

- The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.
- The courage not to fear or deny difference; but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and to grow from encounters with them.
- The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one’s immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.

Following this lecture, Ikeda placed ever stronger emphasis on education for global citizenship. In a rapidly globalizing world, he believed we must build a society grounded in a shared understanding that there is no happiness that only we enjoy, no suffering that afflicts only others, and it is impossible to pursue one’s security and national interest at the expense of the people of other countries.

The concept of education for global citizenship was given a boost in the international discourse in 2012, when UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Global Education First Initiative that prioritized the fostering of global citizens who can respond to complex problems of our century. In 2015, the promotion of education for global citizenship was included under Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs): “Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.”

Ikeda was among those who called for the promotion of education for global citizenship to be adopted in the SDGs. In his 2014 peace proposal, he put forward three key elements that could form the basis of a program of global citizenship education:

- To deepen understanding of the challenges facing humankind, enable people to explore their causes and instill the shared hope and confidence that such problems, being of human origin, are amenable to human solutions;

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, from a speech, “Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship,” delivered at Teachers College, Columbia University, June 13, 1996.

- To identify the early signs of impending global problems in local phenomena, develop sensitivity to such signs and empower people to take concerted action; and
- To foster empathetic imagination and a keen awareness that actions that profit one's own country might have a negative impact on or be perceived as a threat by other countries, elevating this to a shared pledge not to seek one's happiness and prosperity at the expense of others.

The concept of global citizenship is central to the philosophy of the three founding presidents of the Soka Gakkai. First president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi argued that the nations of the world should shift toward "humanitarian competition," where they work together to develop cooperatively, rather than engaging in modes of competition that prioritize their own prosperity at the expense of others.

In the 1950s, against the backdrop of intensifying division and confrontation during the Cold War, second president Josei Toda promoted an ethos of "global nationalism"—a sense of identity that transcends nation and culture and is rooted in awareness of a shared humanity.

Fostering global citizens is a core goal of the educational institutions Ikeda founded in the United States, Japan, Brazil and Asia. He wrote: "Soka University of America was founded . . . in the hope and desire that all who learn here will be able to develop and polish the inner strength needed to generate limitless value from all forms of knowledge, to forge, in [their] capacity as world citizens, the peace and happiness of humankind."<sup>2</sup>

The Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and Dialogue, which Ikeda founded in 1993, serves as a center for exchange of ideas and inspiration, bringing together scholars and activists around issues of global concern, including an annual Global Citizens Seminar.

In his travels to more than 50 countries, Ikeda always focused on interacting with youth in the firm belief that encouraging an ethos of global citizenship is the surest way to build lasting peace. And in the same spirit, he delivered more than 30 lectures at universities in various countries.

He also promoted education for global citizenship through his writings.

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<sup>2</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, in "The University of the Twenty-first Century—Cradle of World Citizens," a message to the first commencement ceremony of Soka University of America, May 22, 2005.



Daisaku Ikeda with Dr. Arnold J. Toynbee  
(London, May 1972)



Meeting Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai  
(Beijing, December 1974)



With Rosa Parks (Los Angeles, January 1993)



Meeting Dr. Joseph Rotblat (Okinawa, 2000)



Soka Gakkai youth representatives present Nuclear Age Peace Foundation President David Krieger with 13 million signatures for the Abolition 2000 campaign (Hiroshima, February 1998)



The “Seeds of Hope” exhibition jointly created by the SGI and the Earth Charter International (Malaysia, 2012)



Participants in the International Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition (Hiroshima, August 2015)

## 4.1 BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHER: Buddhism in Action

*“On the one hand, religion seeks out and strives to bring human beings into unity and harmony with the eternal and universal. At the same time, religion is ideally characterized by a commitment to contribute to the betterment of the real lives of peoples and societies. We must never forget that people do not exist to serve religion; religion exists to serve the cause of human happiness and peace.”<sup>1</sup>*

Daisaku Ikeda’s peace activities were rooted in the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, the key Mahayana Buddhist scripture that was promoted by the 13th-century Japanese priest Nichiren to enable all people to overcome suffering. The Lotus Sutra proclaims the infinite potential and dignity inherent in the life of each person and is a guide to unleashing the transformative potential of the individual. It teaches how to develop the highest human qualities of courage, wisdom and compassion and promotes the ideal of bodhisattva action for the sake of others.

Ikeda endeavored to make the profound philosophy of the Lotus Sutra and the Buddhism of Nichiren relevant to modern times.

Ikeda’s aim was to clarify and apply these teachings within the context of contemporary society, to identify through dialogue shared universal human values that accord with the core value of the dignity of life, and to promote mutual understanding, cooperation and peace.

He published extensively on the life of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, on the Lotus Sutra and on the teachings of Nichiren, sometimes in the form of dialogues with other scholars, and always with emphasis on the relevance of Buddhist teachings to the real challenges of daily life.

The purpose of religion, in Ikeda’s view, is to liberate people from within, to enable them to establish peace and happiness in their lives.

“Does religion make people stronger, or does it weaken them? . . . Does it encourage what is good or what is evil in them? Are they made better and more wise—or less—by religion?’ These are the questions we need to ask of all religions, including of course Buddhism, if we are to succeed in fully ‘humanizing’ them.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, interview in *Emzin* magazine, Slovenia, November 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, *2008 Peace Proposal—Humanizing Religion, Creating Peace* (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 2008), p. 17.

## 4.2 BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHER: Interfaith Dialogue

*“Taking the determination to alleviate human suffering as our point of departure, we have engaged in discussions of shared concerns in order to bring forth the wisdom fostered within each cultural and religious tradition and clarify the ethics and behavioral norms that can break through impasses. . . . Through dialogue, we share the vital energy of the best in our respective spiritual traditions; we hone the vision that enables us to experience the fullness of our humanity; we learn to initiate shared action based on our best selves.”<sup>1</sup>*

Ikeda held dialogues with leading scholars and representatives of many of the world’s major faith traditions, including Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. He believed that people of different faiths need to come together to pool their wisdom and energies in the search for solutions to global problems.

In 2009, he published *The Persistence of Religion: Comparative Perspectives on Modern Spirituality* together with Baptist minister and former Harvard Professor of Divinity Harvey G. Cox, and a dialogue entitled *Buddhism: A Way of Values* with Indian Buddhist scholar Lokesh Chandra, director of the International Academy of Indian Culture. In 2011, he published *New Horizons in Eastern Humanism: Buddhism, Confucianism and the Quest for Global Peace* with renowned scholar of Confucianism Professor Tu Weiming.

From the Islamic world, Ikeda’s dialogue partners included Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, Professor of International Communication at the University of Hawaii Majid Tehranian and Research Professor of Social Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University Nur Yalman. In their published dialogue *A Passage to Peace: Global Solutions from East and West*, Professor Yalman commented, “Your dialogues on civilization and religion are a bridge uniting the peoples of the world. By providing forums where intelligent discussions on momentous topics can take place you perform a service of great value to all mankind.”<sup>2</sup>

Inspired by Ikeda’s leadership, SGI and Soka Gakkai representatives regularly take part in interfaith activities at the local and national levels, especially in multicultural societies such as Malaysia, the USA, the UK and Germany, as well as participating in international forums including the Parliament of the World’s Religions.

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP), founded by Ikeda in 1962 to promote research on the cultural heritage of Asia and the relevance of Buddhism and other religions in the modern world, also engages in extensive interfaith initiatives with representatives of different faiths, including Christianity, Buddhism and Islam.

Beginning in 1997, the IOP and the Soka Gakkai published 20 items as part of their Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series, including facsimile editions and romanized texts, to aid the study of early Mahayana Buddhism. The IOP also created the exhibition “The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” which has been seen by nearly one million people in 17 countries and territories.

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, *2015 Peace Proposal—A Shared Pledge for a More Humane Future: To Eliminate Misery from the Earth* (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 2015), pp. 28–29.

<sup>2</sup> Nur Yalman and Daisaku Ikeda, *A Passage to Peace* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), pp. 128–29.



Ikeda is made an Honorary Member of the International Academy of Indian Culture, a center for the study of Buddhism and Eastern culture, by Director Lokesh Chandra (Tokyo, November 1998)



*The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra* by Daisaku Ikeda and other scholars of Buddhism (published by World Tribune Press, 2000–03)



*Gilgit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the National Archive of India, Facsimile Edition* (published by Soka Gakkai, 2012)

## APPENDIX: PROPOSALS

Every year from 1983 to 2022, on January 26, Daisaku Ikeda published a peace proposal to commemorate the SGI's founding. These proposals explored the interrelation between core Buddhist concepts and the diverse challenges facing global society, with the aim of realizing peace and human security. In addition, he also made proposals focusing on issues such as educational reform, sustainable development, strengthening the United Nations and nuclear abolition.

### ❖ Annual Peace Proposals ❖

2022	Transforming Human History: The Light of Peace and Dignity
2021	Value Creation in a Time of Crisis
2020	Toward Our Shared Future: Constructing an Era of Human Solidarity
2019	Toward a New Era of Peace and Disarmament: A People-Centered Approach
2018	Toward an Era of Human Rights: Building a People's Movement
2017	The Global Solidarity of Youth: Ushering in a New Era of Hope
2016	Universal Respect for Human Dignity: The Great Path to Peace
2015	A Shared Pledge for a More Humane Future: To Eliminate Misery from the Earth
2014	Value Creation for Global Change: Building Resilient and Sustainable Societies
2013	Compassion, Wisdom and Courage: Building a Global Society of Peace and Creative Coexistence
2012	Human Security and Sustainability: Sharing Reverence for the Dignity of Life
2011	Toward a World of Dignity for All: The Triumph of the Creative Life
2010	Toward a New Era of Value Creation
2009	Toward Humanitarian Competition: A New Current in History
2008	Humanizing Religion, Creating Peace
2007	Restoring the Human Connection: The First Step to Global Peace
2006	A New Era of the People: Forging a Global Network of Robust Individuals
2005	Toward a New Era of Dialogue: Humanism Explored
2004	Inner Transformation: Creating a Global Groundswell for Peace
2003	A Global Ethic of Coexistence: Toward a "Life-Sized" Paradigm for Our Age
2002	The Humanism of the Middle Way: Dawn of a Global Civilization
2001	Creating and Sustaining a Century of Life: Challenges for a New Era
2000	Peace through Dialogue: A Time to Talk
1999	Toward a Culture of Peace: A Cosmic View
1998	Humanity and the New Millennium: From Chaos to Cosmos
1997	New Horizons of a Global Civilization
1996	Toward the Third Millennium: The Challenge of Global Citizenship
1995	Creating a Century without War through Human Solidarity
1994	Light of the Global Spirit: A New Dawn in Human History
1993	Toward a More Humane World in the Coming Century
1992	A Renaissance of Hope and Harmony
1991	Dawn of the Century of Humanity
1990	The Triumph of Democracy: Toward a Century of Hope
1989	Toward a New Globalism
1988	Cultural Understanding and Disarmament: The Building Blocks of World Peace

1987	Spreading the Brilliance of Peace toward the Century of the People
1986	Dialogue for Lasting Peace
1985	New Waves of Peace toward the Twenty-first Century
1984	A World Without War
1983	New Proposals for Peace and Disarmament

### ❖ United Nations ❖

2006	Fulfilling the Mission: Empowering the UN to Live Up to the World's Expectations
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### ❖ Nuclear Weapons ❖

Apr 2023	Statement on the G7 Hiroshima Summit, the Ukraine Crisis and No First Use of Nuclear Weapons
Jan 2023	Statement on the Ukraine Crisis and No First Use of Nuclear Weapons
2022	Statement to 2022 NPT Review Conference Calling for No First Use of Nuclear Weapons
2009	Building Global Solidarity Toward Nuclear Abolition
1988	Complete Disarmament as a Global Movement (on the occasion of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament, SSD III)
1982	A New Proposal for Disarmament and the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (on the occasion of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament, SSD II)
1978	Ten-Point Proposal for Nuclear Disarmament (on the occasion of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament, SSD I)

### ❖ Sustainable Development ❖

2012	For a Sustainable Global Society: Learning for Empowerment and Leadership
2002	The Challenge of Global Empowerment: Education for a Sustainable Future
1990	The Environmental Problem and Buddhism
1978	Oneness with the Environment

### ❖ Education ❖

The education proposals present some of the key ideas that Ikeda has been discussing since the 1970s and respond to particular issues within the Japanese educational system but also discuss ideas relevant to education in general.

2001	Reviving Education: The Brilliance of the Inner Spirit
2000	Building a Society Serving the Essential Needs of Education

### ❖ Sino–Japanese Relations ❖

1968	Proposal for the Normalization of Sino–Japanese Relations
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[\[www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/resources/works/props\]](http://www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/resources/works/props)

## APPENDIX: WORKS PUBLISHED

Daisaku Ikeda was a prolific writer whose works range from Buddhism to essays, poetry and children's stories. Some 250 of his books have been translated into more than 50 languages overall. In addition, he published over 70 dialogues with prominent figures from around the world in the fields of the humanities, politics, economics, the sciences, faith traditions and the arts.

The following is a selection of works published in English.

### ❖Buddhism❖

<b><i>The World of Nichiren Daishonin's Writings, Vols. 1–4</i></b> , with Masaaki Morinaka and Katsuji Sato (Soka Gakkai Malaysia, 2003–05)
<b><i>The Heart of the Lotus Sutra, Lectures on the “Expedient Means” and “Life Span” Chapters, Vols. 1-3</i></b> (SGI-USA, Santa Monica, 1995–96)
<b><i>The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra: A Discussion, Vols. I–VI</i></b> (World Tribune Press, 2000–03)
<b><i>The Flower of Chinese Buddhism</i></b> (John Weatherhill, 1986; Middleway Press, 2009)
<b><i>Life: An Enigma, a Precious Jewel</i></b> (Kodansha International, 1982)
<b><i>Buddhism, The First Millennium</i></b> (Kodansha International, 1977; Middleway Press, 2009)
<b><i>The Living Buddha</i></b> (John Weatherhill, 1976; Middleway Press, 2008)

### ❖Dialogues❖

<b><i>The Power of Hope: Thoughts on Peace and Human Rights in the Third Millennium</i></b> with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel (I.B. Tauris, London · New York, 2021)
<b><i>Creating the Culture of Peace: A Clarion Call for Individual and Collective Transformation</i></b> with Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former UN Under-Secretary-General (I.B. Tauris, 2020)
<b><i>Toward A Century of Peace—A Dialogue on the Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding</i></b> with Kevin P. Clements, founding director of the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago (Routledge, 2019)
<b><i>Peace, Justice and the Poetic Mind: Conversations on the Path of Nonviolence</i></b> with Stuart Rees, former director of the Sydney Peace Foundation (Dialogue Path Press, Cambridge, MA, 2018)
<b><i>Global Citizenship: Toward a Civilization of Wisdom, Love and Peace</i></b> with José V. Abueva, founding president of Kalayaan College and former president of the University of the Philippines (Kalayaan College, 2016)
<b><i>Knowing Our Worth: Conversations on Energy and Sustainability</i></b> with Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, German environmentalist and co-president of The Club of Rome (Dialogue Path Press, 2016)
<b><i>The Wisdom of Tolerance: A Philosophy of Generosity and Peace</i></b> with former Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid (I.B. Tauris, 2015)
<b><i>Living As Learning: John Dewey in the 21st Century</i></b> with Jim Garrison and Larry Hickman, former presidents of the John Dewey Society (Dialogue Path Press, 2014)
<b><i>The Art of True Relations: Conversations on the Poetic Heart of Human Possibility</i></b> with Sarah Wider, professor of English and Women's Studies at Colgate University and former president of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society (Dialogue Path Press, 2014)
<b><i>Compassionate Light in Asia</i></b> with Jin Yong, wuxia novelist and essayist (I.B. Tauris, 2013)
<b><i>America Will Be! Conversations on Hope, Freedom and Democracy</i></b> with Vincent Harding, civil rights leader and professor emeritus of religion and social transformation at the Iliff School of Theology (Dialogue Path Press, 2013)
<b><i>New Horizons in Eastern Humanism: Buddhism, Confucianism and the Quest for Global Peace</i></b> with Confucian scholar Tu Weiming (I.B. Tauris, 2011)

<b><i>Into Full Flower: Making Peace Cultures Happen</i></b> with peace activist Elise Boulding (Dialogue Path Press, 2010)
<b><i>The Persistence of Religion: Comparative Perspectives on Modern Spirituality</i></b> with Harvey Cox, Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard University (I.B. Tauris, 2009)
<b><i>Human Rights in the Twenty-first Century</i></b> with Austregésilo de Athayde, Brazilian journalist and president of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (I.B. Tauris, 2009)
<b><i>Ode to the Grand Spirit</i></b> with Chingiz Aitmatov, Kyrgyz author and former Kyrgyz ambassador to the EU, NATO and UNESCO (I.B. Tauris, 2009)
<b><i>Buddhism: A Way of Values</i></b> with Buddhist scholar Lokesh Chandra (Eternal Ganges Press, 2009)
<b><i>A Passage to Peace</i></b> with Nur Yalman, professor of social anthropology and Middle Eastern studies at Harvard University (I.B. Tauris, 2009)
<b><i>A Dialogue between East and West: Looking to a Human Revolution</i></b> with Ricardo Díez-Hochleitner, honorary president of the Club of Rome (I.B. Tauris, 2008)
<b><i>A Quest for Global Peace: Rotblat and Ikeda on War, Ethics and the Nuclear Threat</i></b> with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Joseph Rotblat (I.B. Tauris, 2007)
<b><i>Moral Lessons of the Twentieth Century: Gorbachev and Ikeda on Buddhism and Communism</i></b> with former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (I.B. Tauris, 2005)
<b><i>Planetary Citizenship: Your Values, Beliefs and Actions Can Shape a Sustainable World</i></b> with futurist Hazel Henderson (Middleway, 2004)
<b><i>Reflections on the Global Civilization: a Buddhist-Islamic Dialogue</i></b> with Majid Tehranian, former director of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research (I.B. Tauris, 2016)
<b><i>Choose Hope: Your Role in Waging Peace in the Nuclear Age</i></b> with anti-nuclear weapons campaigner David Krieger (Middleway, 2002)
<b><i>Choose Peace</i></b> with peace studies pioneer Johan Galtung (Pluto Press, 1995)
<b><i>A Lifelong Quest for Peace</i></b> with Nobel Peace and Chemistry Prize Laureate Linus Pauling (Jones and Bartlett, 1992; I.B. Tauris, 2009)
<b><i>Human Values in a Changing World: A Dialogue on the Social Role of Religion</i></b> with sociologist of religion Bryan Wilson (Macdonald, 1984; I.B. Tauris, 2008)
<b><i>Before It Is Too Late</i></b> with cofounder of The Club of Rome Aurelio Peccei (Kodansha International, 1984; I.B. Tauris 2008)
<b><i>Choose Life: A Dialogue</i></b> with British historian Arnold J. Toynbee (Oxford University Press, 1976; I.B. Tauris, 2007)

### ❖ Other Topics ❖

<b><i>The New Human Revolution, Vols. 1–27, 30</i></b> (World Tribune Press, 1995–2022)
<b><i>The Light of Learning: Selected Writings on Education</i></b> (Middleway Press, Santa Monica, 2021)
<b><i>Journey of Life: Selected Poems of Daisaku Ikeda</i></b> (I.B. Tauris 2014)
<b><i>A Forum for Peace: Daisaku Ikeda's Proposals to the UN</i></b> , Olivier Urbain, ed. (I.B. Tauris, 2014)
<b><i>Discussions on Youth</i></b> (World Tribune Press, 2010)
<b><i>The Human Revolution, Vols. 1–6</i></b> (John Weatherhill, 1972–1999; World Tribune Press, 2004)
<b><i>A New Humanism: The University Addresses of Daisaku Ikeda</i></b> (Weatherhill, 1996; I.B. Tauris, 2010)

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## APPENDIX: INSTITUTES FOUNDED

Daisaku Ikeda founded numerous institutions such as schools, museums and research centers, all of which are aimed toward the advancement of peace, culture and education.

### ❖Oriental Philosophy❖

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) was founded in 1962 to promote research on the cultural heritage of Asia and compile academic material on Eastern thought and philosophy, as well as to clarify the relevance of Buddhism and other world religions in the modern world. In addition to conducting critical scholarship on Nichiren Buddhism, the Lotus Sutra and the philosophy of value creation, the IOP undertakes research on issues including bioethics, the global environment, gender issues and the linkages between religion and humanism. The institute also sponsors and participates in a wide range of international conferences, colloquiums and interfaith initiatives with representatives of different faiths including Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. One example of the institute's efforts to share its academic achievements with the general public is the exhibition, "The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence," which has been viewed by around one million people across Asia, Europe, and South America. [<https://www.totetu.org>]

### ❖Cultural Exchange❖

The **Min-On Concert Association** was founded in 1963 to deepen mutual understanding and friendship between different peoples and countries by promoting global music and cultural exchange, in the belief that artistic expression can foster peace by transcending differences of nationality, ethnicity and language. Min-On has participated in music, dance and performing arts exchanges with groups from over 100 countries and territories. Min-On also aims to offer audiences in Japan the opportunity to enjoy the world's finest music and performing arts. Min-On's activities also include sponsoring the Tokyo International Music Competition and organizing free school concerts for students. In February 2015, the Min-On Music Research Institute (MOMRI) was launched to investigate how music can contribute to peacebuilding from the perspectives of psychology, sociology, education and ecology. [[www.min-on.org](http://www.min-on.org)]

The **Tokyo Fuji Art Museum** was established in 1983 with the founding principle to serve as "a window unto the world through the arts and culture." Founded on the belief that the finest works of art should be accessible to all, the museum emphasizes the power of art to transcend borders and unite people across cultures. In particular, the museum seeks to foster a consciousness of global citizenship by actively hosting numerous international exchange exhibitions that connect people's hearts.

The museum houses a collection of some 30,000 artworks, including distinguished Western paintings that provide a comprehensive overview of 500 years of Western art history. Its collection of early photography is especially notable. As a trailblazer in promoting international cultural exchange, the museum was awarded the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation in 1990. [[www.fujibi.or.jp/en/](http://www.fujibi.or.jp/en/)]

### ❖Peace❖

The **Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and Dialogue** is located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Founded in 1993, its mission is to build cultures of peace through

learning and dialogue inspired by Buddhist humanism. Its programs include the annual Ikeda Forum for Intercultural Dialogue, a seminar series for doctoral students exploring global citizenship, and Dialogue Nights for college students and young professionals. The center also hosts a fellows program aimed at advancing research on value-creating education, as well as Indigo Talks—a speaker series featuring distinguished scholars engaging with the insights of founder Daisaku Ikeda. Additionally, the center’s books on the many dimensions of peacebuilding have been used in more than 1,000 college and university courses to date. All of this work is guided by Ikeda’s conviction that open-hearted and open-minded dialogue presents humankind with the surest path to peace. [[www.ikedacenter.org](http://www.ikedacenter.org)]

The Toda Peace Institute was founded in 1996 to honor the vision of the second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda for sustainable peace, a world without nuclear weapons and respect for the inherent dignity of life.

It catalyzes practical, policy-oriented conversations between scholars, practitioners, policymakers and civil society leaders to discern innovative and creative solutions to the major problems confronting the world in the twenty-first century.

Through its key thematic programs, the institute produces cutting-edge analyses, policy briefs and reports, practical peace proposals and innovative policy ideas via evidence-based policy-relevant research and dialogical workshops and conferences. [[www.toda.org](http://www.toda.org)]

#### ❖Education❖

2023	Soka International School Malaysia
2008	Korea Soka Happiness Kindergarten
2003	Brazil Soka Schools
2001	Brazil Soka Kindergarten
2001	Soka University of America
1994	Malaysia Soka Kindergarten
1993	Singapore Soka Kindergarten
1992	Hong Kong Soka Kindergarten
1985	Soka Women’s College, Tokyo
1982	Kansai Soka Elementary School
1978	Tokyo Soka Elementary School
1976	Sapporo Soka Kindergarten
1973	Kansai Soka Junior and Senior High Schools
1971	Soka University, Tokyo
1968	Soka Junior and Senior High Schools, Tokyo

**Soka Schools:** The Soka Junior and Senior High Schools, established by Ikeda in Kodaira, Tokyo, in 1968, together with the Kansai Soka Junior and Senior High Schools founded five years later, represent the beginning of the development of the Soka School system, which today comprises kindergartens, elementary and junior and senior high schools. Kindergartens have also been established in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Brazil. Kansai and Tokyo Soka High Schools were both included by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in its “Super Global High Schools” project that concluded in March 2021.

Soka education is based on the concept that the core focus of education should be the lifelong happiness of the learner and the development of the unique personality of each child toward leading a socially contributive life. [[www.soka.ed.jp](http://www.soka.ed.jp) (Japanese only)]

**Soka University, Japan (SUJ)**, was founded by Ikeda in Hachioji, Tokyo, in 1971, with the following mission statement:

- *Be the highest seat of learning for humanistic education*
- *Be the cradle of a new culture*
- *Be a fortress for the peace of humankind*

SUJ has a combined enrollment of around 6,500, including graduate students, as well as around 5,000 enrolled in correspondence courses. Some 200 students are enrolled at the two-year Soka Women's College (dedicated April 1985). SUJ has academic exchange agreements with over 260 universities in some 70 countries and territories and accepts approximately 1,000 international students each year. SUJ's internationalism is highly regarded, and it has been selected for the Top Global University Project of Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. It has also ranked high in the "internationality" category of the Times Higher Education (THE) Japan University Rankings every year.

The institution is open to all qualified students without regard to religious affiliation. [[www.soka.ac.jp/en](http://www.soka.ac.jp/en)]

Founded in 2001, **Soka University of America (SUA)** is a private, non-profit, four-year liberal arts college and graduate school located in Aliso Viejo, California. With a mission to "foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life," SUA students have come from over 70 countries worldwide. Ranked among the top liberal arts colleges in the country (U.S. News and World Report), SUA is open to students of all nationalities and beliefs, committed to diversity in its academic community and founded on the belief that student-centered education that fosters a global humanistic perspective on the world will advance the cause of lasting peace and lead to real solutions to humanity's most pressing issues. [[www.soka.edu](http://www.soka.edu)]

The **Makiguchi Foundation for Education** was established in honor of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, an educator and founder of the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Society for Value-Creating Education), the predecessor of the Soka Gakkai. The foundation's mission is to contribute to world peace and human happiness by promoting the healthy development of young people through educational opportunities. It provides grants and scholarships to students, financial support for international educational projects and grants for various other educational-related initiatives.

### ❖Sustainability❖

The **Soka Amazon Institute** represents the crystallization of Daisaku Ikeda's vision for protecting the ecological integrity of the Amazon. Created in 2014 to continue the environmental preservation efforts initiated in the 1990s by the Amazon Ecological Research Center, the Soka Amazon Institute is responsible for managing the Dr. Daisaku Ikeda Private Natural Heritage Reserve (RPPN Daisaku Ikeda) located on the outskirts of Manaus. The institute also operates a natural seed bank that supports the conservation of

native Amazon forest species. Forest restoration and afforestation initiatives are carried out in deforested areas, schools and public spaces.

Through Academia Ambiental, its environmental education program, the institute offers immersive nature classes for public and private schools, covering topics such as ecology, history, archaeology, sustainability, global citizenship, the Earth Charter and the SDGs. The institute also conducts public education initiatives and supports partner companies in their sustainability programs. It partners with key universities and research institutions for knowledge exchange. The activities and programs of the Soka Amazon Institute are sustained through the support of donors and partner companies.

## APPENDIX: UNIVERSITY LECTURES

Daisaku Ikeda has delivered lectures on topics relevant to education and civilization at over 30 universities and academic institutions around the world.

Institution	Title	Date
University of Palermo, Italy	From the Crossroads of Civilization: A New Flourishing of Humanistic Culture <i>(by proxy)</i>	Mar 23, 2007
Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies, India	A New Humanism for the Coming Century	Oct 21, 1997
University of Havana, Cuba	Building a Great Spiritual Bridge to the New Century	Jun 25 1996
Teachers College, Columbia University, USA	Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship	Jun 13, 1996
Simon Wiesenthal Center, USA	Makiguchi's Lifelong Pursuit of Justice and Humane Values	Jun 4, 1996
Tribhuvan University, Nepal	Homage to the Sagarmatha (Everest) of Humanism: The Living Lessons of Gautama Buddha	Nov 2, 1995
Ateneo de Santander, Spain	Toward the Dawn of Twenty-first Century Civilization	Jun 26, 1995
East-West Center, University of Hawai'i, USA	Peace and Human Security: A Buddhist Perspective for the Twenty-first Century	Jan 26, 1995
University of Bologna, Italy	Leonardo's Universal Vision and the Parliament of Humanity	Jun 1, 1994
Moscow State University, Russia	The Human Being: A Magnificent Cosmos	May 17, 1994
Shenzhen University, China	The Infinite Horizons of Humanism	Jan 31, 1994
Harvard University, USA	Mahayana Buddhism and Twenty-first Century Civilization	Sep 24, 1993
Brazilian Academy of Letters, Brazil	The Hopeful Dawn of a Humanistic Civilization	Feb 12, 1993
Claremont McKenna College, USA	In Search of New Principles of Integration	Jan 29, 1993
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China	The Twenty-first Century and East Asian Civilization	Oct 14, 1992
Ankara University, Turkey	A New Silk Road from the Cradle of Civilization	Jun 24, 1992
Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, India	Toward a World without War: Gandhism and the Modern World	Feb 11, 1992
Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong	The Chinese Humanist Tradition	Jan 30, 1992
Harvard University, USA	The Age of "Soft Power" and Inner-Motivated Philosophy	Sep 26, 1991
University of the Philippines, Philippines	Peace and Business: Toward a Universal Spirit of Fairness and Justice	Apr 21, 1991
University of Macau, Macau	A New Global Awareness	Jan 30, 1991
Peking University, China	The Path of Education, the Bridge of Culture: A Personal Observation	May 28, 1990

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
University of Buenos Aires, Argentina	The Cosmopolitan Spirit in a Land of Cultural Fusion	Mar 1, 1990
L'Institut de France, France	Art and Spirituality in East and West	Jun 14, 1989
Fudan University, China	People as the Protagonists of History	Jun 9, 1984
Peking University, China	The Great Path to Peace: A Personal Observation	Jun 5, 1984
University of Bucharest, Romania	Standing at the Crossroads of Civilizations	Jun 7, 1983
Sofia University, Bulgaria	A Harmonious Fusion of the Cultures of East and West	May 21, 1981
University of Guadalajara, Mexico	On the Mexican Poetic Spirit	Mar 5, 1981
Peking University, China	Toward a New Vision of "The People": Observations on China	Apr 22, 1980
Moscow State University, USSR	A New Path to East-West Cultural Exchange	May 27, 1975
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), USA	Toward the Twenty-first Century	Apr 1, 1974

[www.daisakuikedada.org/sub/resources/works/lect/](http://www.daisakuikedada.org/sub/resources/works/lect/)

### ❖ **Selected Quotes from Lectures** ❖

#### ❖ **University of Havana (1996)**

##### **“Building a Great Spiritual Bridge to the New Century”**

The transformation in the inner awareness or state of life of an individual is intrinsically connected to the flowering of the poetic spirit. An expansion in this inner realm of life encourages empathy for others and strengthens the desire to contribute to society; it brings forth the “sun” of wisdom and compassion from within the depths of one’s life. The light of this “sun” is that of respect for human dignity and for the sanctity of all life, and it can be tapped equally by all. The process of human revolution, bringing forth this inner sun, is the motive force that can enhance solidarity among people, lead to the prosperity of society, and create peace for humankind.

#### ❖ **Moscow State University (1994)**

##### **“The Human Being: A Magnificent Cosmos”**

I am one who believes that absolute and indestructible happiness in life lies only in working selflessly for others, while expanding one’s inner realm from the “lesser self” caught up in the snares of egotism to the “greater self” fused with universal life.

#### ❖ **University of Bologna (1994)**

##### **“Leonardo’s Universal Vision and the Parliament of Humanity”**

“The great man is . . . a man without whom the world would seem to us incomplete.” This aptly describes Leonardo da Vinci, who illuminates the Italian Renaissance with undying light. As we stand amid the chaos of the *fin de siècle*, I can think of no other period of time more in need of people as lofty and independent as Leonardo than today. The creation of a new world order, centered on the United Nations, will depend finally on how many such true cosmopolitans we can summon to carry out that daunting task.

❖ **Harvard University (1993)**

**“Mahayana Buddhism and Twenty-first Century Civilization”**

If the tragedies of this century of war and revolution have taught us anything, it is the folly of viewing the reform of external factors, such as social systems, as the sole determinant of human happiness. I am convinced that in the coming century, foremost importance must and will be placed on an inward-directed reformation, inspired by a new understanding of life and death.

❖ **Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (1992)**

**“Toward a World Without War: Gandhism and the Modern World”**

Gandhi’s optimism was absolute and not relative. It was never contingent on his analysis of objective conditions or a prognosis derived therefrom. His belief in nonviolence and justice grew out of his absolute trust in humanity. This was an unconditional faith which he came to through a rigorous process of introspection, probing the very depths of his being. The indestructible conviction which he thus gained was something which not even death could take from him.

❖ **Ankara University (1992)**

**“A New Silk Road from the Cradle of Civilization”**

Globalism can only be aspired to by those who possess this kind of open-mindedness and are capable of striking a balance between the interests of their own nation and the world, between the individual and the universal.

❖ **L’Institut de France (1989)**

**“Art and Spirituality in East and West”**

The creative life makes a new breakthrough, achieves self-renewal, every day, always attuned to the original rhythm of the universe, and by so doing it brings about a complete transformation.

❖ **Sofia University (1981)**

**“A Harmonious Fusion of the Cultures of East and West”**

I strongly believe that politics and religion should commit themselves to a common concern: nothing less than the well-being of humanity. Needless to say, both spheres can best fulfill their original roles only when they uncompromisingly maintain total dedication to human welfare rather than to their own interests.

## APPENDIX: ACADEMIC HONORS AND RECOGNITION

Daisaku Ikeda was awarded over 400 academic honors, mainly honorary doctorates and honorary professorships, from academic institutions in over 50 countries and territories, in recognition of his efforts to promote peace, educational and cultural exchange.

### ❖ Selection of Academic Honors Received ❖

Country	University	Award	Year
Republic of Korea	Hankuk University of Foreign Studies	Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy	2023
USA	University of Minnesota	Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters	2022
Uzbekistan	National University of Uzbekistan	Honorary Doctorate	2019
Venezuela	Central University of Venezuela	Honorary Doctorate	2019
Spain	University of Alcalá	Honorary Doctorate	2018
USA	DePaul University	Honorary Doctorate	2016
Thailand	Thammasat University	Honorary Doctorate	2013
Malaysia	University of Malaya	Honorary Doctorate	2010
China	Tsinghua University	Honorary Professorship	2010
Canada	Université Laval	Honorary Doctorate	2010
Indonesia	Universitas Indonesia	Honorary Doctorate	2009
Jordan	University of Jordan	Honorary Doctorate	2004
USA	Morehouse College	Honorary Doctorate	2002
Australia	University of Sydney	Honorary Doctorate	2000
Korea	Jeju National University	Honorary Doctorate	1999
India	University of Delhi	Honorary Doctorate	1998
Mongolia	National University of Mongolia	Honorary Doctorate	1997
Hong Kong, China	University of Hong Kong	Honorary Doctorate	1996
USA	University of Denver	Honorary Doctorate	1996
UK	University of Glasgow	Honorary Doctorate	1994
Italy	University of Bologna	Honorary Doctorate	1994
Brazil	Federal University of Rio de Janeiro	Honorary Doctorate	1993
Kenya	University of Nairobi	Honorary Doctorate	1992
Turkey	Ankara University	Honorary Doctorate	1992
Philippines	University of the Philippines	Honorary Doctorate	1991
Argentina	University of Buenos Aires	Honorary Doctorate	1990
China	Peking University	Honorary Professorship	1984
Peru	National University of San Marcos	Honorary Professorship	1981
Russia	Moscow State University	Honorary Doctorate	1975

[www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/resources/records/degree/list-of-conferrals.html](http://www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/resources/records/degree/list-of-conferrals.html)

❖ ***Excerpts from citations and speeches given at conferral ceremonies*** ❖

❖ **Université Laval (Honorary Doctorate, 2010)**

***Rector Denis Brière***

“For more than forty years, Dr. Ikeda has worked hard to promote education for global citizenship. He deeply believes that the conscience of global society can change only through education. The Soka universities founded by Dr. Ikeda provide instruction for the acceptance and comprehension of different values and cultures. They promote the central value of his thought, which is: ‘I am human and nothing of what is human is alien to me.’”

❖ **University of Jordan (Honorary Doctorate, 2004)**

***Vice-President, Professor Shtaywy Abdalla***

“He has devoted his entire career to rooting out the fundamental causes of conflict and to the promotion of a culture of peace. . . . As thinker, author and educator, [he] has committed himself to the noble premise that [it is] only through personal interaction and dialogue across cultural and philosophical boundaries that human beings can nurture trust and understanding.”

❖ ***Statement of Prince El Hassan bin Talal  
on the occasion of the awarding of the Honorary Doctorate  
from the University of Jordan***

“Our shared vision of peace is one of mutual trust and understanding between the individuals of our small planet, through networks not of abstracts or ideologies but between people who have institutionalized places of safety for all conversations . . .

“I would suggest that you are such a guardian of our shared human birthright, with whom moderates and centrists from every culture can discuss the idea of heritage without frontiers, of global understanding between citizens. As a scholar and a religious man gifted with great comprehension and compassion, you have called us to higher thought and more thoughtful action.”

❖ **University of Delaware (Honorary Doctorate, 2000)**

***President, Professor David P. Roselle***

“Distinguished educator and articulate advocate of global good citizenship, your life has been a quest to use the power of education to . . . ‘drive back the dark clouds of the mind.’ . . .

“Visionary humanist, you have always believed and espoused that within each individual lies the key to lasting peace and happiness. Convinced that everyone—when nurtured by education—has both the potential and the resources to make a true and lasting difference in our world, you have devoted yourself to imparting values that engender respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of all people.

“Tireless worker for a better world, you have entered into meaningful dialogue with individuals around the globe, enjoying their respect and friendship, and to further your impact on the world’s conscience and consciousness, you have published in more than 20 languages.”

❖ **University of Sydney (Honorary Doctorate, 2000)**

***Deputy Vice-Chancellor Judith Kinnear***

“In a life which has been given wide international acclaim it would be easy to overlook Daisaku Ikeda’s promotion of other people’s interests. His insight into the human condition is apparent in his humour, in his photography, in his poetry and in

face-to-face communication. He has associated with Presidents and Princes but still makes a deep commitment to ordinary citizens, to schoolchildren and to students from all parts of the globe. His promotion of international dialogue and his own Soka Gakkai's fostering of international friendship are a gift to humanity. He is a unique world citizen."

❖ **University of Delhi (Honorary Doctorate, 1998)**

*Vice Chancellor, Professor V.R. Mehta*

"We recognize Ikeda's untiring efforts in the field of education, international understanding, pacifism and in promoting individual happiness. In a world of conflicting aims and beliefs, Ikeda, as the leader of Soka Gakkai International, has worked for over four decades to bring nations together based on peaceful dialogue, understanding and culture. . . .

"As a philosopher, Ikeda has provided new hope for mankind through his New Humanism based on the concept of a cosmological dharma of King Ashoka implying truth, virtue and justice. . . . Ikeda places a deep respect for life as the prime requisite of his new humanism. He believes that humans should not, under any circumstances, kill other humans. In brief, Ikeda has been transforming society by empowering the individual and leading him to happiness."

❖ **University of Hong Kong (Honorary Doctorate, 1996)**

*Public Orator, Professor Mimi Chan*

"Religious leader, philosopher, author, poet, international humanitarian, educationalist, a prominent figure in the cultural scene of the world: these names can only begin to sum up the many attributes and achievements of President Daisaku Ikeda, truly a Renaissance man.

"As a staunch advocate of world peace Ikeda has traveled widely and published extensively in an effort to promote peace and international understanding. He has directed his energies in particular towards healing the rift between China and Japan and towards advocating a revitalized and strengthened United Nations."

❖ **Other Awards ❖ (selection)**

UN Peace Award (1983), UNHCR Humanitarian Award (1989), Rosa Parks Humanitarian Award (1993), Simon Wiesenthal Center International Tolerance Award (1993), Tagore Peace Award (1997), Rizal International Peace Award (1998), PRIO Prize (International Peace Research Institute, Oslo) (2002). Ikeda has also been decorated with national orders from 23 countries around the world.

❖ **Memberships ❖ (selection)**

Ikeda is an honorary member of the Club of Rome, an honorary adviser of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, an honorary senator of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, an advisory board member of the World Centers of Compassion for Children, honorary life member of the Thoreau Society, honorary member of the Russian Academy of Arts and a nonresident member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters.

❖ **Honorary Citizenships ❖**

Daisaku Ikeda was awarded over 800 honorary citizenships.

## APPENDIX: FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

### ❖ About Daisaku Ikeda □

Life and achievements  
[www.daisakuikeda.org](http://www.daisakuikeda.org)

Timeline  
[www.daisakuikeda.org/main/profile/timeline](http://www.daisakuikeda.org/main/profile/timeline)

❖ Quotations from written works □  
Quotations by theme on the Daisaku Ikeda website  
[www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/quotations](http://www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/quotations)

### ❖ Institutions Founded by Daisaku Ikeda □

Min-On Concert Association  
[www.min-on.org](http://www.min-on.org)

Tokyo Fuji Art Museum  
[www.fujibi.or.jp/en/](http://www.fujibi.or.jp/en/)

Institute of Oriental Philosophy  
[www.totetu.org](http://www.totetu.org)

Ikeda Center for Peace, Dialogue, and Learning  
[www.ikedacenter.org](http://www.ikedacenter.org)

Toda Peace Institute  
[www.toda.org](http://www.toda.org)

Soka Schools, Japan  
[www.soka.ed.jp](http://www.soka.ed.jp) (Japanese only)

Soka University, Japan  
[www.soka.ac.jp/en](http://www.soka.ac.jp/en)

Soka University of America  
[www.soka.edu](http://www.soka.edu)

Soka International School Malaysia  
[www.sism.edu.my](http://www.sism.edu.my)

Brazil Soka Schools  
[www.colegiosoka.org.br](http://www.colegiosoka.org.br)

Soka Amazon Institute  
[www.institutosoka-amazonia.org.br](http://www.institutosoka-amazonia.org.br)

### ❖ Related Links □

Soka Gakkai (global)  
[www.sokaglobal.org](http://www.sokaglobal.org)

Soka Gakkai First President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi  
[www.tmakiguchi.org](http://www.tmakiguchi.org)

Soka Gakkai Second President Josei Toda  
[www.joseitoda.org](http://www.joseitoda.org)

Soka Gakkai International  
Action for Peace  
[www.sgi-peace.org/](http://www.sgi-peace.org/)

**Soka Gakkai**  
**International Office of Public Information**  
Tel: +81 3 5360 9830 | Fax: +81 3 5360 9885  
Media queries: <https://www.sokaglobal.org/contact-us/media-room.html>

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