Peace Proposal 2003

A Global Ethic of Coexistence:

Toward a "Life-Sized" Paradigm for Our Age

I would like to offer some thoughts and observations on the occasion of the twenty-eighth SGI Day—January 26, the anniversary of the establishment of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

We are now three years into the twenty-first century, an age in which we believe the key themes need to be the culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations. In marked contrast to these ideals of peace and dialogue, however, the world is beset with a sense of looming crisis, with escalating dangers in such flash points as the Middle East and Northeast Asia.

Far from freeing ourselves from the negative legacy of the war- and violence-ridden twentieth century, we see these threatening trends continue to accelerate and expand. The high hopes with which we greeted the new century have faded, replaced with an all-too-prevalent sense of frustration and hopelessness. Most disturbing is the feeling that the world appears to be turning its back on dialogue—the willingness to engage and talk that affirms the vitality of the human spirit.

As the world holds its breath, the vast majority of people yearn for a peaceful settlement to the Iraqi crisis. Yet for some reason a U.S.-led attack is portrayed as inevitable. With

respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is at the heart of Middle East tensions, suicide bombings and military countermeasures have been escalating since the start of the year in a vicious cycle of force against force.

Added to this is the recent dramatic escalation of tensions surrounding North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea). A détente had been developing on the Korean Peninsula for several years encouraged by the "Sunshine Policy" of outgoing Korean president Kim Dae Jung. This was instantly dashed when Pyongyang announced, in an apparent act of brinkmanship, its withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the safeguard accord with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and signaled the resumption of its weapons program.

A Critical Gap

These developments remind me of Dr. Arnold Toynbee's apocalyptic warning to humankind expressed in our dialogue thirty years ago:

> The most alarming feature of present-day society is that the power conferred by technology has recently increased to an unprecedented degree at an unprecedented rate, while the average level of the moral—or immoral—behavior of the human beings who now wield this vastly increased power has remained stationary, or may actually have declined.

> We are aware of this widening gap between power and ethical standards of behavior. The gap has been dramatized in the discovery of the technique for atomic fission… .
>
> It is hard to see how, in the atomic age, mankind can avoid committing mass-suicide if it does not raise the average level of its behavior to the level actually attained by the Buddha and by Saint Francis of Assisi. (330)

Dr. Toynbee maintained that the ethical standard—the power of the spirit fully committed to nonviolence embodied by these rare religious giants—cannot remain as unattainable "counsels of perfection" (330) but must be brought to bear on controlling the monstrous products of modern technology such as nuclear weapons. Based on his reading of history, however, he was pessimistic about our ability to do this. What hope he had, he pinned on the possibility of a revolution in religion, which might improve the world through a rapid and wide-reaching transformation of people's hearts and minds.

We must bear in mind the words of this great scholar as the crises of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction become aggravated today.

I have consistently asserted that the mission of the Soka Gakkai in society is to employ the spirit that wells from the very depths of life to do battle with those forces in the world—violence, authority, materialism—that continue to violate human dignity. In concrete terms, the essence of this spiritual battle lies in never losing faith in the power of words, in remaining committed to dialogue under any circumstance.

This is much more difficult than it sounds, for sooner or later we will be confronted with the type of adversary that prefers violence to discussion, the kind of evil that denies the language which constitutes the core of our humanity. It is then that our commitment to dialogue is most severely tested and its true worth proven.

Eichmann's Silence

I am reminded of the chilling example of Adolf Eichmann, the former SS lieutenant colonel who played a pivotal role in the horrors of the Holocaust. After the war, he was captured in Argentina and clandestinely flown to Jerusalem by Israeli intelligence agents. After a trial that held the world's attention, he was hanged in 1962. Though responsible for orchestrating appalling atrocities, Eichmann asserted in court that he was simply doing his duty as a cog in the Nazi machine, that he was only following orders.

A recent Japanese play by Masakazu Yamazaki revolves around the interaction between Eichmann and Peter Malkin, the Israeli secret agent who masterminded the arrest. The theme focuses on whether Eichmann can be induced to express remorse for his deeds.

Even at the expense of violating the rules, Malkin attempts to persuade Eichmann to account for his crimes by appealing to his sense of justice. In the play, Malkin pleads with Eichmann: "I want words. Give me your words. Please" (337). But Eichmann never once utters words of remorse.

The drama identifies a key difference between evil and justice. Evil does not require that those it destroys understand its nature, whereas justice cannot function without being understood. Justice consists of explanation. It is the need to understand evil people and evil itself, to explain why they exist.

Explanation and understanding are made possible through the power of words. Without them, justice and good are impossible. The character of Malkin, at a loss before Eichmann's rejection of words and dialogue, embodies how difficult it is to engage in and not abandon the spiritual battle to the end.

But these difficulties—which made even Toynbee pessimistic of our prospects—must not be allowed to stifle our spirituality, no matter the oppressive weight with which they bear down on us. We must not be silent. Permitting good to be silenced plays into the hands of evil. If indeed we are *Homo loquens*—man made human by the capacity for speech—we must not give up the effort of dialogue regardless of the magnitude of the crisis.

Let us continue the work of pricking holes in the shrouds of darkness, always focusing on the long term and rising above the emotions of the trying moment. We must exert all our strength of the spirit to press forward with dialogue.

We should do so in the conviction voiced so vividly by Hemingway in *The Old Man and the Sea:* "[M]an is not made for defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated" (96).

The "War on Terrorism"

It is apparent that the disquieting developments involving Iraq and North Korea are directly and indirectly linked to the "war on terrorism" launched after the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in the United States.

With the destruction of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the terrorist network seems to have been expelled from that country. But it is far from being eradicated, and its links to attacks in Indonesia, Russia, Kenya and elsewhere have been suspected if not confirmed. A war waged against a borderless entity lacking the defined structure of a sovereign state could drag on forever.

What kind of leadership is required in such a volatile and explosive situation?

Hopefully, Japan will do more than just follow the lead of the United States and will take autonomous measures in line with its alliance commitments. I think that Japan's post-Cold War diplomacy has now reached a crucial moment: Its capacity for independent and responsible decision-making will be tested by how it responds to the immediate issues of Iraq and North Korea as well as to the broader challenge of contributing with China and our other neighbors in Northeast Asia to peace and stability in the region.

For better or worse, however, the initiative for resolving the present emergency is in the hands of the United States, the world's only superpower whose economic and military might is without parallel in history. Therefore, I must express my concern, shared by many observers around the world, about the United States' hard-line stance, under which it has defined the struggle against terrorism as a new kind of war and advocated preemptive strikes against potential terrorist threats.

Without question, the September 11 attacks were a profoundly shocking event, drawing the sympathy of the international community for the United States. This was proven by the NATO governments' decision to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which defines an armed attack on one member of the alliance as an attack on them all. This measure was never taken even during the Cold War.

Nevertheless, the U.S. with the United Kingdom as its only substantive military ally plunged into the attack on Afghanistan, disregarding the call for broad international cooperation. The "success" of that venture seems to have encouraged the U.S. to turn its back on the principle of international cooperation and further inclined it to unilateralism. This trend had already been in place for several years, as evidenced by the U.S. rejection of the Kyoto Protocol against global warming, the unilateral withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the refusal to participate in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the decision not to ratify the International Criminal Court (ICC). There has been growing criticism of this tendency both inside and outside the U.S.

National Strength in the 21st Century

Dr. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., the former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and Dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, is one of the concerned experts who warn against these trends.

Dr. Nye, whom I have had the pleasure to meet on a number of occasions, considers that national strength consists of two elements which should complement each other: hard power, taking forms such as economic and military might; and soft power, i.e., values and culture, the ability to lead other countries to seek what one seeks and the ability to "co-opt rather than coerce." He maintains that military force is part of the response to terrorism. More importantly, however, it will require diligent efforts and long-term perseverance, as well as close cooperation with citizens of other countries, to eliminate terrorist attacks (*Paradox* 9; "Gurobaru" 16).

He also states in *The Paradox of American Power:*

> Power in the twenty-first century will rest on a mix of hard and soft resources. … Our greatest mistake in such a world would be to fall into a one-dimensional analysis and to believe that investing in military power alone will ensure our strength. (12)

His arguments are convincing to all who wrestle with the thorny question of the continuing incidence of terrorist outrages.

Terrorism is absolutely unacceptable. It may even be that emergency response with armed force is necessary to combat it in certain cases—it cannot be denied that such a resolute attitude can have a deterrent effect. To use Max Weber's terms, total rejection of military force may be possible as a personal "ethic of ultimate ends" but is not necessarily realistic as an "ethic of responsibility," an option in the political arena (120). In Dr. Nye's case, this can be seen by the fact that he once held an important position at the Pentagon.

I believe that for hard power, military power in particular, to produce any concrete results without plummeting into a cycle of hatred and retaliation, those who possess it must exercise moderation and self-control—the very fount of soft power—and continue to display these qualities even if its use is absolutely impelled by circumstances.

The Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gassett (1883–1955) defined civilization as "nothing else than the attempt to reduce force to being the *ultima ratio* [last resort]" (*Revolt* 75). What is referred to as civilization here is a quality of inner self-control made manifest.

From this perspective, it is inevitable that there will be questioning of the gap between U.S. unilateral actions and the universal ideals which it professes. Freedom, human rights and democracy, as Dr. Nye points out, are the essence of soft power and hold the potential to further expand the country's magnetism as the information age advances.

I believe that it is in the U.S.'s best interests, as well as the world's, for the sole superpower to exercise genuine self-control.

With regard to the looming Iraq crisis, a dictatorship armed with weapons of mass destruction is indeed a hideous and formidable prospect. Yet attempts to prevent this grave eventuality will only gain the heartfelt support of the world's people when the U.S. honestly acknowledges its status as possessor of the world's largest stockpiles of such weapons. Self-control in a tangible form must be demonstrated—for example, by the willingness to support and participate in a universal monitoring system to contain the threat or through concrete steps and procedures for disarmament with the goal of eventual abolition. Such efforts are indispensable to ensuring moral persuasiveness.

Treasures of the Heart

A strong impetus toward hard power is provided by globalization, where the rules seem to be heavily weighted in favor of the U.S. Under the slogan of liberalization and deregulation, globalization has become conspicuously slanted toward money capitalism and high finance. Economic liberalization breeds uncertainty. High-risk, high-return competition creates a handful of "winners" and a large majority of "losers." Even the winners' positions are not stable, as they must continue competing until, theoretically, they become the "last man standing." Thus, the relentless globalization of markets, in the absence of a safety net, tends inevitably to become a winner-takes-all money game.

In societies where a grotesque disparity of income and inequality prevails—where, for example, the top one percent of the population controls nearly half the national wealth—scant attention is paid to the needs of "losers," either at home or overseas. The deterioration of care for others—those we consider removed from ourselves—signals a loss of self-control and moral leadership.

Joseph E. Stiglitz, 2001 Nobel laureate in economic science, traveled to numerous countries and regions that were adversely affected by globalization and examined their problems while he was the senior vice president of the World Bank. He warns as follows in *Globalization and its Discontents:*

> Modern high-tech warfare is designed to remove physical contact: dropping bombs from 50,000 feet ensures that one does not "feel" what one does. Modern economic management is similar: from one's luxury hotel, one can callously impose policies about which one would think twice if one knew the people whose lives one was destroying. (24)

Money, it must be remembered, is a means, not an end. Of course it plays an intrinsic role in facilitating economic activity—creating goods and services, fostering production and investment—but its function should be in a supporting, not a principal, role. The end must be people's lives. The problem is that money has come to be seen as an end in itself.

In the teachings of Nichiren, the thirteenth-century Buddhist sage whose teachings inspire the activities of the SGI, we find this passage: “More valuable than treasures in a storehouse are the treasures of the body, and the treasures of the heart are the most valuable of all” (Nichiren, *Writings* 851).

Sensitivity to others’ lives, death, pain and suffering, or “the treasures of the heart,” is being eroded as the human being is trivialized. In an age dominated by globalization, it is the “winners” rather than “losers” who are most deeply infected by this pathological insensitivity to life. This is by no means limited to America.

I consider myself privileged to count the eminent economist John Kenneth Galbraith among my friends. Dr. Galbraith was an early voice warning against the excesses of the Internet “bubble,” and we owe it to ourselves to heed his call for a fundamental rethinking of our core values:

> Economics, the total of goods and services provided, is not the only guide or measure of success. From now on success should be measured more in the various enjoyments of life and the degree of genuine happiness these produce. (27)

The United States is an immensely broad-minded, embracing country. But there is widespread concern that the tremendous shock of the September 11 attacks has shifted the country’s focus away from explanation, understanding and consensus through dialogue, and towards coercive hard power.

The atrocities of indiscriminate terrorism must not be tolerated. Yet a single-minded reliance on hard power in response to terrorism demonstrates a sad failure of imagination. To allow ourselves to be trapped in cycles of hatred and retaliation is to allow ourselves to be dragged down to the level of the terrorists. It is to lose sight of what Ortega y Gassett defined as civilization and to slide back towards barbarism. In the worst case, it could provoke cataclysmic division in our world.

Have we escaped the nightmares of violence and war committed in the name of ideology throughout the twentieth century just to find ourselves in the grasp of another, equally insidious nightmare today?

A "Life-Sized" Paradigm

The way forward, I believe, lies in developing a life-sized paradigm by which to understand our world and where we stand in it. By "life-sized" here I am referring to a way of thinking that never deviates from the human scale. It is simultaneously a humane sensitivity to life as a whole and also to the details of everyday human existence. I believe it is an approach that is urgently required in response to the challenges of our age.

Physically, the individual human being is a small, even insignificant presence in the natural world. Even if humankind were to bring extinction upon itself, the impact from the perspective of the history of life on Earth would be trivial at most.

In the words of Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), “Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed.” He goes on to assert: “I shall have no more if I possess worlds. By space the universe encompasses and swallows me up like an atom; by thought, I comprehend the world” (233–34).

“Comprehend,” like the French *comprendre,* includes the meanings to encompass and enfold as well as to understand and appreciate. Thus “thought” is not used in a narrow, Cartesian sense—an intellectual activity that reduces everything to quantifiable components. Rather, it embraces the qualitative virtues of human sensitivity as well as the holistic activities of life through both a “mathematical” and an “intuitive” mind, engaging one’s entire being (171). It is along these lines that Pascal sought to clarify those modes of thought that would serve as the basis for human dignity.

This shares a deep commonality with the teachings of Buddhism, which stress the proper balance among what are referred to as the “six sense organs” (Jpn *rokkon*, Skt *sad indriyani*), i.e., the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch as well as the faculty of the intellect. In the Mahayana tradition, the structures of consciousness, including realms typically referred to as the subconscious and beyond, are explored in their full complexity. For present purposes, however, it is enough to note that Buddhism views the balanced functioning of the six sense organs as essential to the full and healthy workings of our life activities.

This points to the idea “by thought, I comprehend the world,” which served for Pascal as the basis for affirming human dignity. In the Buddhist tradition, this is expressed in the following phrase: “The eighty-four thousand teachings are the diary of one’s own life” (Nichiren, *Zenshu* 563). In other words, the manifold teachings of Buddhism (traditionally said to number eighty-four thousand) are all a detailed account of the inner life of a single individual. To me, this is a magnificent expression of what I have referred to as a life-sized paradigm.

What are the full dimensions and breadth of this paradigm? What norms of behavior—the ethical standards and average level of behavior Toynbee was discussing above—are to be derived from it?

Towards clarifying this, let me quote again from the writings of Nichiren: “Everything that is contained within this body of ours is modeled after heaven and earth…. The inhaling and exhaling of breath through our nose is like wind that wafts through the mountains and valleys; the inhaling and exhaling of breath through our mouth is like the winds that course through the open skies. Our eyes are like the sun and the moon; their opening and closing is like day and night. The hair on our heads is like the stars; our eyebrows are like the northern dipper. Our blood flow is like rivers and streams, and our bones are like gems and stones. Our skin and our flesh are like the earth and soil, and the fine hairs on our body are the grasses and forests that cover the earth. The five major organs correspond to the five planets in the sky and the five sacred mountains on the earth” (*Zenshu* 567).

While some of these comparisons may seem somewhat stretched to our modern sensibility, this passage in fact describes what we would now term an ecosystem. The phrase “modeled after” evokes the intimate, inseparable and interdependent relationship between humans, nature and the cosmos. Specifically, this passage suggests that to the extent that humans are a “reed,” they can never exist outside a framework of interdependence and interrelation. This can even be read as a warning that when we harm the ecosystem, introducing for example plutonium or other poisons into it, the negative impact of our actions will eventually return to us in clear and harsh form.

When Ortega y Gasset stated, “I am myself plus my circumstance, and if I do not save it, I cannot save myself” (*Meditations* 45), or when D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930) declared on his deathbed, “Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen” (104), they were giving voice to an imperative that we all must heed, namely, that there is no “self” without “other,” no humanity without nature.

It was in this same sense that the founding president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1943), made this prescient statement in his 1903 work *Jinsei chirigaku* (The Geography of Human Life): “Such noble sentiments as compassion, goodwill, friendship, kindness, earnestness and simplicity cannot be successfully fostered except within the local community” (1: 25; *Geography* 21).

An Ethic of Coexistence

I choose to use the phrase “an ethic of coexistence”—which was the central theme in a lecture I delivered at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1992—to express the ethical norm that links these statements. This is an ethos that seeks to bring harmony from conflict, unity from rupture, that is based more on “us” than “me.” It signals a spirit that seeks to encourage mutual flourishing and mutually supportive relationships among humans and between humans and nature. It is my belief that by making this ethic of coexistence the shared spirit of our age, we can find the certain means to close the “gap between power and ethical standards of behavior” that was of such deep concern to Dr. Toynbee.

From this perspective, it is hard not to find current trends deeply disturbing. The focus of attention appears to be exclusively on “power”—whether this takes the form of nuclear or of biological weapons—with virtually no attention paid to the more fundamental questions of ethics and values. But weapons of mass destruction have come into existence through the workings of the human heart: Our only hope, then, of reducing or eliminating the terrors they entail must lie squarely in the inner reformation of our lives. Only by taking larger social factors into account can we have any hope of containing, much less abolishing, these terrible weapons.

As Stiglitz notes, “Caring about the environment, making sure the poor have a say in decisions that affect them, promoting democracy and fair trade are necessary if the potential benefits of globalization are to be achieved” (216). All of these actions would, of course, contribute to eliminating the long-term causes of terrorism. And none of them, in my view, can be realized without an ethic of coexistence.

In an age dominated by brute force and the arrogant bark of commands, talk of an ethic of coexistence may strike some as empty rhetoric. But I do not think we can dismiss the words of former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich as such. “The deepest anxieties of this prosperous age,” he writes, “concern the erosion of our families, the fragmenting of our communities, and the challenge of keeping our own integrity intact. These anxieties are no less part and parcel of the emerging economy than are its enormous benefits: the wealth, the innovation, the new chances and choices” (4). (Reich resigned after a phone call from his son expressing loneliness at the absence of his extremely occupied father.)

The new economy has certainly expanded the scope of personal freedom and choice, creating opportunities for people of talent and determination to amass vast fortunes. At the same time, the rapidly spreading waves of electronic communication now effortlessly transcend the frameworks of state sovereignty. Ultimately, new modes of communication may bring about the deterioration and even disintegration of traditional forms of social organization such as corporations and schools, local communities and even families. With the increasing weight accorded to the individual, the sense of belonging and place which supports that individual is being dismantled, generating a deepening sense of identity crisis.

Reich does not reject the new economy or the evolving Internet society. But he is deeply concerned with the question of how to realize a more balanced way of life, in which people are never subjugated to or become the tools of their own technology. The goal

toward which he is working could be called a “Net-based society with a human face” following Stiglitz’s call for globalization with a human face.

The real question is whether the changes we are experiencing represent the advancement of human happiness, whether we will be able to savor the actual experience of happiness if we passively allow these trends to take their natural course. Sharing the concerns expressed by Reich, one cannot look to the future with unbridled optimism.

A Somber Recognition

The fundamental problem highlighted by Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859)—“in democratic times what is most unstable, in the midst of the instability of everything, is the heart of man” (188)—has yet to be addressed effectively. Furthermore, the critical condition of the global environment today stands as a strict admonishment.

We must never forget our true, human proportion—the fact that, within the larger context of the ecosystem, we are but “a reed, the most feeble thing in nature.” If we lose sight of this reality, we may find ourselves following the mammoth down the sudden path of extinction.

Our natural sense of human dignity revolts with outrage at grotesque departures from a life-sized paradigm.

As protagonists of an ethic of coexistence we respond with a sharp sense of crisis to the gross maldistribution of wealth in our world. It is estimated, for example, that the income of the most wealthy one percent of the world's inhabitants is equivalent to the total income of the poorest fifty-seven percent. At the same time, if the per capita energy consumption of developing countries were to rise to even half that of the advanced industrial economies, the energy reserves of this finite planet would soon be exhausted (UNDP, *Report* 19).

How can we then stand idly by as efforts to prevent global warming, such as the Kyoto Protocol, are eviscerated? How can we possibly remain unconcerned by truly bizarre forms of modern warfare—where million-dollar missiles fly over the heads of people subsisting on one or perhaps two dollars per day?

At the start of the last century, the American psychologist and philosopher William James (1842–1910) brought a life-sized paradigm to bear on the question of countering militarism. He called for the "moral equivalent of war"—forms of public service and contribution by which the "military ideals of hardihood and discipline would be wrought into the growing fiber" of the people (171).

In any era, war is filled with horror. But in contemporary, high-tech warfare, there is no room for this life-sized way of thinking even to start to enter into the picture.

It is with a sense of somber recognition that we are spurred to a deepened awareness. It is the process of constantly reconfirming our recognition and awareness of who we are

and what we are doing that gives rise to forms of self-control and self-mastery, which alone would guarantee the moral leadership of the strong and the victorious. This is the hope that I fervently embrace with regard to the world's lone superpower, the United States.

Restoring the Balance

When we examine the uneven surface of modern techno-scientific civilization from the perspective of this life-sized paradigm, what we see is that the balance between the "six sense organs" mentioned earlier has been lost: Human beings' intellectual capacities have become grossly distended, and the sensual and affective capacities atrophied.

As we have seen, this imbalance always takes the form of a dulling of our natural responsiveness to life and the realities of daily living. This natural sensitivity characterizes the world's ordinary citizens and is the basis of our universal humanity. The historian Jules Michelet (1798–1874) expressed this when he concluded from a thorough reading of human history, in particular religious and spiritual history, that "man in all ages, thought, felt, and loved in the same way" (8).

The answer is to restore our sensitivity to life itself, our palpable awareness of the realities of daily living; and here, I believe, women have an especially important role to play. While men tend to become captive of their distended intellectualizations and abstractions, in all eras women have remained more firmly rooted in the rhythms of the natural ecosystem.

Ortega y Gasset described the runaway excesses of modern civilization as follows: "…the hero goes forward, impetuous and straight as an arrow, towards a glorious goal." At the same time, he intimated that what awaits the achievement of that goal is nothing other than the global environmental crisis we face. "Circumstance! *Circum stantia!*" he wrote. "That is, the mute things which are all around us" (*Meditations* 41). He was a person of vision who saw that while the natural environment may be silent and reserved, it has a vast depth, power and capacity that mocks the small ingenuity of human endeavor.

Unless we actively lend our ears to this call, we will not be able to locate the horizons of a new civilization. It was this insight that caused Ortega y Gasset to use the analogy of a "maiden" to describe the power, capacity and depth of nature. Just as it was "the feminine" that saved Faust's soul from destruction, today, as our once glorious goal of material progress has faded, it is increasingly clear that our only hope of survival is by discovering ways of coexisting with the natural environment.

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962), who played a key role in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights whose fifty-fifth anniversary is marked this year, has left us with these memorable words: "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home… Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere."

In the home, the focal point of human relations, and in the ordinary face-to-face interactions of daily life—it is here that a rich awareness and sensitivity to human rights, supported by a sense of the reality of life, is fostered. And, needless to say, no one plays a greater role in this process than women. It is for all these reasons that I have for some time expressed my view that the twenty-first century must be a century of women.

In a book whose Japanese version was completed at the end of last year, I discussed the contribution of women with my coauthor, the futurist Dr. Hazel Henderson. She described her motivation for becoming involved in the environmental movement in New York City in the mid-1960s this way: “Most of us who started to work on the ‘Citizens for Clean Air’ campaign were mothers. Since we knew what a big task bringing children up is, we were anxious for our children to have the best futures possible” (254–55).

The best futures possible… Dr. Henderson recalls that it was this life-sized, human-scaled approach, this commitment to children, that enabled the movement to gain widespread support and change seemingly intractable realities.

It truly appears that women are more adept at the quiet art of one-to-one dialogue. For it is in the exchanges and interactions of daily life—like the steady rhythm of the sun, rising and lighting each day—that new awareness is formed and genuine and lasting value is created. This gradual process of transformation amidst the continuity and consistency of daily life stands in stark contrast to the violent upheaval of revolution.

James D. Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, has stated that the true gauge of success for development projects is not to be found in numerical data or statistics but "in the smiles of children" (278). This is a perspective I find resonant with Dr. Henderson's.

Dr. Henderson has also called for a shift to what she calls a "love economy" in which the real indicators will be measures of human happiness rather than simply gross national product. This proposal arose from her direct perception of the fact that that which is correct in theory does not necessarily produce the desired result in society.

The importance of this kind of life-sized approach, supported by women's authentic sense of the realities of daily life, has in recent years been recognized not only in the realm of economics but also in other fields such as peace and security. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a groundbreaking resolution that urged member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. This direction was further confirmed by the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the UN General Assembly, "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century" (UNGA, Further Actions). These measures are only fitting in light of the enormous suffering endured by women as a result of armed conflict.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has stated that "the best strategy for conflict prevention is to expand the role of women as peacemakers" (Address). I sincerely

believe that if this awareness can be fully established as the consensus of international society, we can move beyond mere conflict prevention and the easing of tensions. Rather, we can actually effect a lasting transformation from the present culture of war to a new culture of peace.

Human Security in the 21st Century

Next, I would like to discuss some of the specific policies that are needed if we are to make the global society of the twenty-first century one that is dedicated to the welfare of individuals, the world's "ordinary citizens."

Many of these policies should be developed at the UN or through the medium of the UN. Before that, however, we need to be concerned about an erosion of the very basis of the UN system: Its ability to function as the only truly universal forum for international cooperation is undermined in direct proportion to burgeoning American unilateralism.

It has only been for a short time—only since the end of the Cold War, throughout which the UN often seemed paralyzed by the exercise of veto powers by the permanent members of the Security Council—that the UN has taken center stage and begun to fulfill its true potential. The UN has yet, however, to find the right balance between the Kantian ideal of lasting peace for all humankind and Hobbesian clashes of sovereign states, leaving it vulnerable to the power struggles of major global players such as the U.S. Its ongoing challenge is to function as an effective voice advancing the concerns and aspirations of the world's peoples.

With no other organization capable of acting as a substitute, concerted efforts must be made to strengthen the UN system. Respect for minority views, listening equally to the voices of the disempowered—these are the prerequisites for democracy, so strengthening the UN is surely the choice that accords with the universal principles advocated by the U.S.

Here I would like to stress again the centrality of the concept of human security which has been developed in various forums over the last ten years or so.

The Commission on Human Security (CHS) was launched in June 2001. This commission is preparing a report on ways to promote public understanding of the concept of human security and to ensure that human security becomes a universal operational tool for policy formulation and implementation throughout international society. The commission's report is slated for publication in June this year.

A group of thirty-six researchers working in the field of human security has been discussing these issues, and the fruits of their work have been brought together as an open letter on human security to the chairs of the CHS. This report concentrates on four viewpoints: the need to focus on day-to-day insecurities; the need to focus on the most vulnerable segments of society; the need to respect diversity; and the need to encourage reciprocity. It calls for attention to be paid to the problems arising from militarism and globalization as threats to human security (Mushakoji 187–98). These are all concepts that I have stressed for many years, and I strongly endorse this research.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

The first point I would like to examine from the perspective of human security is the problem of weapons of mass destruction, which is at the heart of the Iraqi and North Korean crises. In this regard, I would like to discuss policies aiming to prevent the proliferation and encourage the reduction and eventual abolition of nuclear arms, as the dangers posed by these weapons threaten to spin out of control.

The American scientific periodical *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* announced at the end of last year that the minute hand of the "Doomsday Clock" it publishes had advanced to seven minutes to midnight. The periodical cited numerous reasons for this, including: the abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, which has until now been the foundation of nuclear arms limitation between the U.S. and Russia; the conflict between India and Pakistan, both nuclear-weapon states; increasing concerns about the control and management of fissile materials; and the existence of terrorist groups aiming to acquire nuclear weapons.

Recently, the situation has been aggravated as North Korea has announced not only that it is reactivating nuclear facilities but also that it is withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

If these conditions continue, not only would the framework of nuclear non-proliferation, revolving around the NPT, be shaken to its roots, but there would also inevitably be the

prospect of unstoppable military escalation. Serious shadows would be cast over the prospects for control of other weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and biological arms.

The report of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held last April, called: (1) for the promotion of measures to ensure that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) enters into force; (2) for Cuba, Israel, India and Pakistan to accede unconditionally to the NPT; and (3) for North Korea to observe the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (12–16).

Of the four named countries, Cuba, in October 2002, announced its intention to join the NPT and ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco (the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean). It is vital to the cause of peace that the other three countries (India, Israel and Pakistan) accede to the NPT with all haste and that North Korea renew its participation. Realistically, this can only happen if the international community works together to support and encourage effective confidence-building efforts in the regions concerned.

Regarding the question of North Korea's nuclear weapons development program, it is strongly to be hoped that North Korea will follow the path taken by Cuba—namely, to press ahead with participation in a regional non-nuclear framework as a guarantee of regional security, while remaining within the NPT framework.

A Nuclear-Weapon-Free Northern Hemisphere

I have consistently called for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia. In this region, we can already look to the 1992 joint declaration of a nuclear-weapon-free Korean Peninsula, as well as Mongolia's declaration of nuclear-weapon-free status of the same year, and Japan's three non-nuclear principles (not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan).

Based on such declarations, I think we should now seek a UN-sponsored Northeast Asia peace conference, with North Korean participation, to investigate the future establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in this region and to pursue regional confidence-building initiatives.

At present, the only regional security framework in which North Korea participates is the ASEAN Regional Forum. I think there would be considerable significance in a discussion focusing specifically on Northeast Asia that includes broader UN participation.

By the end of the twentieth century, almost all of the southern hemisphere was covered by nuclear-weapon-free agreements. These agreements have aimed to ensure the security of individual countries not through the possession of nuclear arms but through the fact of *not* possessing them. They have contributed not only to the benefit of each country involved but also to the security of the entire planet. This surely is powerful evidence that such measures are a realistic political option.

This being the case, I would like to strongly propose that one of the challenges the international community should embrace in the twenty-first century is to extend such nuclear-free initiatives to cover the northern hemisphere as well. Proposals for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Central Asia and the Middle East have already been laid out. I believe that the time has come for us to embark on specific measures in this regard in Northeast Asia as well.

Even if time were needed before such a nuclear-weapon-free zone could be declared, an option available to North Korea is to emulate Mongolia in declaring its nuclear-weapon-free status. The declaration by Mongolia was welcomed by the UN General Assembly. The five nuclear-weapon states in 1995 reaffirmed their Negative Security Assurance (that non-nuclear-weapon states party to the NPT would not be subject to nuclear attack) with regard to Mongolia. If North Korea could be assured a similar response, I believe the path toward the declaration of nuclear-weapon-free status would be cleared.

The other core element of nuclear arms limitation, together with the NPT, is the CTBT. Regrettably, the CTBT has still not entered into force more than six years after it was adopted in 1996.

A proposal has been floated whereby the treaty would provisionally enter into force when a certain number of states have ratified it, at which point the system of international monitoring of nuclear tests would begin (Miyamoto 128). To prevent any

further loss of momentum toward nuclear disarmament, I believe this proposal should be given all possible consideration.

Disarmament "In Good Faith"

Heading toward the 2005 NPT review conference, one issue that is essential in ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is the control of ballistic missiles. I would like to call for the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missiles (ICOC), adopted in November 2002, to be given legally binding status.

At the same time as strengthening the formal framework for nuclear arms non-proliferation, I would also like to strongly advocate to the nuclear-weapon states that they make specific efforts to open the path toward the reduction and elimination of nuclear arms. This would be an expression of the spirit of self-control that I earlier posited as the very heart of civilized behavior.

In view of the fact that 2005 also marks the sixtieth anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I propose that a special session of the UN General Assembly, attended by the world's heads of state and government, be dedicated to the cause of nuclear abolition.

Not since the Third UN Special Session on Disarmament fifteen years ago has there been an opportunity for a truly global discussion of the problem of nuclear abolition.

In May of last year, the U.S.-Russia Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (the Moscow Treaty) was agreed upon as the replacement for the ABM treaty. This bilateral agreement is now the only international framework for disarmament; there is no broader multilateral treaty in existence that would promote concrete reductions in the world's nuclear arsenals.

Surely it is time for us to take earnest and concrete steps to realize a world without nuclear weapons in this new century. We must confront head-on this issue on which the fate of all humanity hangs.

I have for some time been calling for the adoption of a treaty for the comprehensive ban of all nuclear weapons. As a first step towards this, I would like to urge the nuclear-weapon states to use such a special session to make progress toward negotiating a nuclear disarmament treaty. This would be a fulfillment of the "unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament" (14) made in the final document of the 2000 NPT review conference three years ago.

Further, I would encourage this special session to discuss the establishment at the UN of a new specialized agency dedicated to ensuring the strict and effective implementation of the nuclear disarmament pledged in Article VI of the NPT back in 1968**:** "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear

disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

The Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research is a body that takes its inspiration from the dedication to peace of Josei Toda (1900–1958), second president of the Soka Gakkai, who declared that nuclear weapons are an absolute evil, threatening the right to life of all humanity. During the lead-up to the NPT review conference in 2005, the Toda Institute will be involved in a research project, in cooperation with other research institutes from around the world, in support of nuclear disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The Millennium Development Goals

The second aspect of ensuring human security for all is to confront the obscene threat to human dignity posed by poverty and starvation.

According to a report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the number of people around the world who have to survive on less than two dollars a day is 2.8 billion, with 1.2 billion forced to subsist on less than one dollar a day. The number of people suffering from malnutrition is thought to exceed 800 million (17–21). It is imperative that the international community take determined steps to remedy this intolerable situation.

In the UN's Millennium Declaration, adopted three years ago, the world's leaders pledged themselves to action on this subject: "We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty."

The UN Millennium Project contains numerous goals to be achieved by the year 2015. These consist of eight core goals divided into eighteen specific, concrete targets, including halving the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day and halving the proportion of people living in hunger. These goals were distilled from the various international conferences held during the 1990s as well as the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. Together they are referred to as the Millennium Development Goals.

The cooperation of all countries will be required if the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved. Further, this will serve as a powerful symbol of the unity of the international community.

However, at the present pace, thirty-three countries, between them representing more than one-fourth of the world's population, will be unable to achieve even half of the targets. UNDP has issued a report that powerfully concludes: "Without a dramatic turnaround there is a real possibility that a generation from now, world leaders will be setting the same targets again" (*Report* 2).

In my peace proposal three years ago, I called for the implementation of a program equivalent to a "Global Marshall Plan." The original Marshall Plan after World War II,

on which this idea was based, is a successful example of victors giving concrete form to the power of self-control. We deeply need to work to embody this same spirit of self-control on a global scale now.

A Solidarity Response

In that sense, I welcome the decision by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) last year to create a World Solidarity Fund (UNDP Release). This idea was included in the WSSD action plan, the Global Implementation Document, and was officially approved by the UN General Assembly in December 2002. It will create the first fund to specifically target the eradication of poverty and promote social and human development. Like the Global Environment Facility (GEF, created after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit), it is significant as a fund established as the outcome of a global summit.

The UN, too, is issuing an annual Report of the Secretary-General covering progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, I would like to propose that world summits be held periodically toward the year 2015 in order to ensure that the world's heads of state and government are thoroughly informed of the content of these reports and to further strengthen international cooperation in this regard. Every second year might be an appropriate timing for such meetings.

This would enable world leaders to gather together before the start of the UN General Assembly, creating a forum for them to focus on the peace and well-being of humanity in the twenty-first century. I think this would be a forward-looking, hope-filled

development. Such summits would not have to be held only at UN headquarters in New York: In fact, I think it would be preferable that they take place in those parts of the world most severely beset by poverty and starvation.

To strengthen the frameworks of international cooperation in this way, it will be essential to have the deep-rooted support and involvement of the people of the world. The UN has launched the Millennium Campaign aiming to create an environment in which people can expand their personal awareness of the Millennium Development Goals and whereby various organizations and entities can cooperate towards their achievement.

The SGI thoroughly endorses the goals of this campaign and will wholeheartedly embark on activities to spread awareness at the grassroots level, in forms such as exhibitions and seminars focusing on related issues. We are also keen to contribute to the creation of a global network of academics and researchers, especially through the activities of the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (BRC). Last year, for example, the BRC published *Subverting Greed: Religious Perspectives on the Global Economy* (Knitter et al), which explores the prospects for global economic justice.

In addition to poverty and starvation, one of the most pressing issues we face is that of water resources. At present, forty percent of the world's population faces a shortage of water, with 1.1 billion people lacking access to safe drinking water. Some 2.5 billion lack access to basic sanitation. It is estimated that more than 5 million die from water-related diseases every year, ten times the number of people killed in wars, on average,

each year. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has stated: “No single measure would do more to reduce disease and save lives in the developing world than bringing safe water and sanitation to all” (60). This is indeed an urgent task.

This year, 2003, has been designated by the UN as the International Year of Freshwater. The 3rd World Water Forum will be held in Japan in March. I feel that Japan, as the host country of this event, should play an active role in areas such as technological support and the provision of skilled personnel.

The global water problem was one of the core themes of the WSSD last year, where Japan and the United States announced a joint initiative called “Clean Water for People.” In the past, Japan has been actively engaged in this field, helping provide more than 40 million people around the world with access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Making full use of this experience, I hope that Japan will demonstrate meaningful leadership in the field of water resources.

Education for All

Along with disarmament and development, the third challenge for human security is that of creating a global society in which all people have access to education. Education not only enables us to live fulfilled lives; it is also the bedrock foundation of any effort to build a culture of peace. In entrenched, multigenerational conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian problem, the only viable hope for solution lies in a sustained program of education for the young.

At the World Conference on Education for All held in Thailand in 1990, it was resolved that the provision of basic education to all people was a core goal for international society. Since that resolution, there has been progress in raising the proportion of children of primary school age enrolled in education. Nevertheless, even today more than 100 million children are denied access to primary education, and nearly 1 billion adults, two-thirds of them women, are illiterate.

These problems were highlighted at the special session of the UN General Assembly on Children in May last year and at the G8 Summit in June. The goals of securing universal basic education and equal education for girls were strongly reaffirmed at these meetings.

To promote these aims, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is coordinating a campaign under the title “Education for All.” In addition, this year marks the start of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012).

This target of Education for All is in line with the thinking of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first president of the Soka Gakkai and the founder of value-creating education. Indeed, Makiguchi dedicated his life to enabling individuals and society to truly benefit from education. As I have referred to many times over the years in these proposals, in *Jinsei chirigaku* (The Geography of Human Life) Makiguchi urged international society to enter an age of “humanitarian competition,” where the aim is to cultivate the spirit of global citizenship and strive for the mutual happiness and benefit of self and other (2:

398–401). At the same time, Makiguchi himself was one of the pioneers of the effort to extend the scope of humanistic education in Japan through the education of women and the establishment of lifetime education. He promoted correspondence courses for women during the turbulent years of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) and, on numerous occasions, proposed a half-day education system where students would engage in formal study for half the day and have access to practical experience in the workplace during the other, emphasizing the importance of building a society centered on lifetime learning (*Soka* 6: 207–32; Shiohara 252–59).

Josei Toda, the second president and also an educator, was likewise involved in distance learning, while I myself, in line with the spirit of these two great predecessors, have promoted a distance learning program from the initial planning stages of Soka University. Soka University's Division of Correspondence Education became a reality in 1976 and now has one of the largest enrollments in Japan as well as the highest graduation rate.

Building on the traditions established since the time of Makiguchi, the SGI has consistently been active in efforts to promote basic education. For example, youth members in Japan have regularly supported UNESCO's literacy campaigns in various countries of the world.

To name just one example of our worldwide activities in this regard, volunteers from the Educators Division of Brazil SGI have, since 1987, offered literacy education for a

wide cross section of age ranges (Ivamoto). These efforts have been officially accredited by the Brazilian Ministry of Education.

The Power of Each Individual

Alongside literacy education, which aims to enhance basic reading and writing skills, in recent years there has been growing awareness of the need for a new form of humanistic education, education that encourages creative coexistence with the natural environment and which fosters a culture of peace.

Recognizing this, we in the SGI proposed the designation of a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development during the preparatory process for the WSSD. This proposal, aimed at promoting education for the sake of building a sustainable global society, was also incorporated in the summit's action plan. In December 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution formally proclaiming the decade, which will start in the year 2005.

Environmental education, like peace education and human rights education, must be at the heart of a new vision of humanistic education. By promoting the kind of education that empowers all people in their active quest for happiness and a better future, we can establish the foundations for a new era of hope in the twenty-first century.

The SGI has for many years been engaged in awareness-building activities about environmental issues. An exhibition on the environment and development, for example,

was launched at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and has since been shown in numerous venues around the world. We are determined to continue to promote environmental education on a global scale.

We are committed to assuring the success of these decades for literacy and sustainability education, providing maximum support in cooperation with relevant UN agencies and NGO partners.

I believe that a pillar of environmental education must be the Earth Charter, which was drafted through the efforts of the Earth Council and for which we have consistently provided support. The Earth Charter reads, in part:

> As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. … This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility.

In finding solutions to environmental problems and the myriad other issues facing our world, what is most essential is that each individual embrace this sense of responsibility and proactive commitment.

In 2002, the SGI cooperated in the production by the Earth Council of the documentary, *A Quiet Revolution.* This film spotlights the human drama of individuals around the world who have taken action to address environmental issues: citizens confronting a

chronic water shortage in Nimi Village in India, taking action to deal with the pollution of Zemplinska Sirava Lake in Slovakia and combating desertification in Kenya. This is striking proof that each individual has the ability to make a difference.

In any age it is individuals of indomitable conviction, courage and passion who have overcome the seemingly impossible to set in motion the forces of historical change.

But society today is pervaded by a sense of powerlessness—"What can I, a single individual, hope to achieve?"—and hopelessness—"Whatever I do, nothing will change…" Doubts gnaw away at our hearts. Even the bravest lose hope faced with reality, and our world closes in upon us. This, surely, is the fundamental evil of our times.

In my dialogue with Dr. David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, the empowerment of the individual became one of our central themes. He suggested we need to extrapolate from Einstein's theory of relativity to find a new theorem for peace. Just as science revealed the enormous amount of energy contained within even a single particle of matter, we must now awaken to the fact that the inner determination within each individual's life at every moment contains the power to change the world (271).

I am convinced that the movement for human revolution pursued by the members of the SGI offers one proof of this theorem.

We cannot remain passive in the face of these severe realities. Rather, we should open ourselves to the limitless power, the unstoppable dynamic of change, that is created when awakened people unite and act together. It is in proving this truth that humanity in the twenty-first century can fulfill its mission.

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