

Humanity and the
New Millennium:
From Chaos to Cosmos

by
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hen the twentieth century began, there was a general belief that human progress was limitless. Now that century is drawing to a close. The lofty ideals and high purposes envisioned at the outset of this century have been belied by the extremist ideologies that have swept the world, leaving only conflict and slaughter in their wake. Perhaps no other century has been witness to such endless tragedy and human folly; the global environment has been grievously damaged, and the gap between rich and poor is greater than ever.

Three years ago today in a lecture at the East-West Center in Hawaii, I shared my sense that the twentieth century has been stained by all-too-frequent slaughter at human hands.¹ The nearer we draw to the close of the century, the stronger grows an anguished sense of the futility and waste that has characterized this era of human history.

In earlier days when voices were raised in alarm at the prospect of full-scale nuclear war, we often heard the dreaded term “overkill.” Then, through the courageous efforts of former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and other world leaders, the structures of the Cold War conflict were dismantled, and today the nightmare of Armageddon seems to have grown somewhat more remote. The term “overkill,” unfortunately, remains with us. Like the curse of Cain, it haunts the world.

It was the late Isaiah Berlin who wrote “no century has seen so much remorseless and continued slaughter of human beings by one another as our own.”² This appraisal is shared by many intellectuals, including American historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

CONCEPT OF TIME RECONSIDERED

What is needed in order to advance human history, to move from darkness to light, from despair to hope, from killing to coexistence? As the end of the century nears, various efforts are being made to probe and gain new understanding of these issues. Here, however, I would like to suggest the value of reexamining the history of humankind on a larger scale and over vaster spans of time.

With such a broad view, Buddhism speaks of three periods after the death of Shakyamuni Buddha [which modern scholarship locates around 500 B.C.E.]. These are the Former Day of the Law when people embracing his teachings can attain enlightenment; the Middle Day of the Law when Buddhism becomes formalized and less effective; and the Latter Day of the Law when his teachings lose the power to lead people to enlightenment. Each of the first two periods is said to last between five hundred and a thousand years. The Latter Day of the Law is believed to last ten thousand years.

When Nichiren, the thirteenth-century Japanese Buddhist sage whose teachings inspire the activities of the SGI, writes that “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo [identified by him as the fundamental Law of life] will spread for ten thousand years and more,” he displays a long-term perspective from which he indicates that his teachings will have the power to awaken people and prevent suffering even in this corrupted “Latter Day of the Law,” and that they will continue to contribute to the welfare of human society into the distant future even ten thousand and more years hence. This is a far-reaching perspective, a great prospect for the future, derived from an extraordinarily profound conviction.

Nichiren’s approach can be said to represent the essence of the Buddhist view of history. The three time periods should not be understood in formalistic or categorical terms. Nor

should they be seen superficially as a successive, linear flow or advance of humanity's spiritual history.

It is evident to me that the above-cited passage reflects Nichiren's intense and unflinching struggle in the face of constant official persecution and gives voice to his clear grasp of the deepest undercurrents flowing through human history.

For those who practice Nichiren's Buddhism, his teachings should therefore be read with an attentive view to their deeper significance, and an attempt to develop the capacity to perceive these undercurrents that flow from past to future. With such a perspective it is possible to identify with his profound compassion for all humanity, and live lives of altruistic service as those Buddhism calls "Bodhisattvas of the Earth."

It is for this reason that we need to reexamine our understanding of the concept of time. We refer casually to "time" in daily conversation, without considering its implications carefully, or being aware of its profundity. Time was a subject of great interest to philosophers such as Martin Heidegger,³ and Henri Bergson.⁴ To facilitate my own exposition, I would like to draw on Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdjaev's (1874-1948) classification of time.

In his essay "History and Eschatology," Berdjaev delineates three classes of time: cosmic, historical, and existential time.

Cosmic time, which can be thought of as physical time, is measurable by the calendar or clock: one day having twenty-four hours, one year 365 days, and so forth. It is time measured against the regular movements of the solar system.

Historical time is what we think of when we use such expressions as "the twentieth century," "100 B.C.E.," or "the second millennium," referring to junctures along the span of physical time. Even more familiar examples are "today," vaguely considered to be an extension of yesterday, and "tomorrow" as an extension of today.

Berdjaev declares both cosmic and historical time to be "fallen time." This judgment may be easy to accept as far as physical time is concerned, for it is a purely theoretical entity, self-contained and isolated from our subjective involvement. But why historical time?

With regard to historical time, he alludes to a future that "eats up" the present, transforming it into past. This insight merits our careful attention.

In the course of our daily existence we tend idly to allow time to slide by, letting tomorrow come as a mere extension of today without purposeful exertion. Such days become expanses of inertia, and we lose sight of the critically important fact that a fruitful tomorrow comes only after a well-lived today.

What Berdjaev calls "existential time" is experienced when we break free of the "fallen time" of daily inertia. It is the experience of joy and sense of fulfillment that come from "seizing the moment" and fulfilling one's innate human mission.

TIME ETERNALLY IN THE PRESENT

Berdjaev writes that existential time is of such profundity that it cannot be expressed by any mathematical calculation. It is supertemporal time, or time eternally in the present. One moment of existential time can have more meaning, fulfillment, and even apparent duration than vast stretches of either of the other two types. It is measured by the intensity of joy or agony experienced in moments when time seems to stand still. One can feel the reality of such time when in the raptures of creative activity or at the moment of one's own death.

What is brought to mind by this dazzling leap of enlightenment and revelation in the move from cosmic and historical time to an appreciation of supertemporal, existential time is Tolstoy's novel, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*.

In this story, an ordinary government employee, whose "self-esteem was gratified by the discharge of his official duties; [his] vanity by mixing in good society,"⁵ lives an ordinary life without any particular vice. Following an accident, however, he is seized by a fatal illness, and in the course of an intense battle with the fear of death, he is able to discover within himself the light of eternity and true happiness.

With consummate skill, the great novelist portrays the dramatic leap from “fallen time” to “supertemporal time.” Ivan Ilyich glimpses the profundity of existential time in the moment of his death, exactly as Berdjaev postulated.

While the cultural milieu which shaped the ideas of both Berdjaev and Tolstoy is within the Christian tradition, these insights can shed important light on the Buddhist understanding of time and history. In his treatise “The Opening of the Eyes,” Nichiren quotes a passage from the *Shinjikan* Sutra:

If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present.⁶

This passage, too, does not refer to cosmic-time causality, such as the formation of water resulting from the combination of hydrogen and oxygen; or historical-time causality, such as the purported inevitability of the move from capitalism to socialism. Buddhism uses the term *inga jji*, or the non-simultaneity of cause and effect, to refer to such linear progressions of causality.

Of most interest to us as human beings, however, are the results that will be manifested in the future. More than any other factor, these are shaped by inner causes in the present moment, that is, by the intensity of our conviction in the plane of what Berdjaev calls the profundity of existential time. This is central to the Buddhist view of time in which the present moment is pivotal—in a sense is everything—and it stands in contrast to a historical conceptualization of time in which the future “eats up” the present. Without this pivotal “now,” past and future are empty and illusory. Our proper focus must be on ourselves at the present moment. Our actions now should be carried out with intensity, with the realization that the depth of this inner determination is the decisive factor which creates the future and makes history. This view of time and causality is referred to in Buddhism as *inga guji*, or the simultaneity of cause and effect.

What Berdjaev described as time eternally in the present or supertemporal time resonates with the Buddhist view, which I chose to describe with the expression “life-time”⁷ in an ongoing dialogue I am conducting on the Lotus Sutra.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries are characterized by rampant historicism, periods during which humankind turned away, in the name of science, from time eternally in the present or “life-time.” In the obsessive pursuit of a blueprint for utopia, nineteenth- and twentieth-century historicism gave itself over to the future that eats up the present, with tragic results. The former Soviet Union became the testing ground for the iron talons of Bolshevism, historicism’s most nightmarish manifestation. In my dialogues with former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian novelist Chingiz Aitmatov, both men spoke of their deep anguish about those times.

The perspectives of either physical or historical time are also inadequate for a full understanding of Nichiren’s confidence that an inner state of vast compassion provides the key to helping people to manifest their true, magnificent potential over the next ten thousand years and through all eternity.

Often it is bitter experiences that lead us to awaken to the most profound spiritual truths. The awakening of Soka Gakkai second president Josei Toda, while in jail for his beliefs, also needs to be understood from the viewpoint of existential time. His realization was that he was a participant, in an eternally present moment, at the ceremony in which the essence of the Buddha’s teachings was entrusted to those who would share it with others in the Latter Day of the Law. He realized that this allegorical ceremony, in which ordinary people (as “Bodhisattvas of the Earth”) pledge to share their understanding of enlightenment to the Mystic Law contained within the Lotus Sutra with others, continues eternally.”

Without Toda’s experience—the starting point in the post-World War II period of the Soka Gakkai’s Buddhist movement of “value-creation” (*soka*)—Nichiren’s reference to “the

assembly on Eagle Peak which continues in solemn state without disbanding”⁸ might have been ignored or dismissed.

DEEPER, SLOWER MOVEMENTS MAKE HISTORY

Those words are resonant only when we seek to grasp them at the deep level of existential time or “life-time” that both encompasses and cuts through the surface flow of history, reaching into its very depths. Buddhism calls for participation in the profound spiritual history of humankind, which is possible only through undergoing great hardship and struggle; as Berdjajev suggests, by the intensity of joy or agony experienced. It is also a message sent from the depths of history to all cosmic life, the “summons of heroes” that Bergson said is found in a “complete and perfect morality.”⁹

Earlier I stressed the necessity of grasping history in larger scales and spans of time. This is because we stand today at an unprecedented turning point in human history. To overcome the crisis facing us we have to cope not only with the immediate pressing issues sometimes referred to as the global *problématique*, but we also need to probe the depths of time and history in order to obtain a far-reaching vision of the future—centuries or even millennia hence.

Without such a perspective we may be defeated by the daunting array of challenges that characterize the world at the century’s end. As the late Konrad Lorenz, Nobel laureate in physiology and medicine, warned, the Earth has already passed the “point of no return.”¹⁰

The late Arnold J. Toynbee, one of the greatest historians of this century, took up the challenge of recording the history of humankind in one vast panorama. He was able to pioneer new ranges of research and leave a highly distinguished legacy. I am aware that a number of historians have criticized, from a specialist perspective, Toynbee’s panoramic view of history, finding fault in matters of detail. However, through lengthy talks with him over a period of ten days in 1973 (the results of which are recorded in the book *Choose Life*), my lasting impression of him is of a man devoted to probing the deepest layers of history, rather than verifying its minutiae. He possessed the kind of penetrating insight that can analyze and organize historical phenomena and envision the future from the most profound dimensions of history, unperturbed by the undue influence of contemporary events. His view was truly that of a world historian.

Toynbee did not embrace any specific religious faith, but even a quick perusal of his works shows that he was intensely interested in the role religion plays in directing these deeper currents of human history. It is clear that he was urging us to resist being swayed by the superficial events of human affairs, and to focus on the essentials, by consistently maintaining the broadest possible perspective. This demonstrates his belief that the religious impulse is a fundamental condition for humanity to be worthy of the name, and for human civilization to exist.

Toynbee’s great interest in religion is shown by the fact that he warmly welcomed me, a young and relatively unknown practitioner of Buddhism from the Far East, listening to what I had to say with sincerity and humility. I still have a vivid memory of his warmhearted expression, and believe that his uniqueness as a historian lay in the centrality he accorded an understanding of humanity and human nature in our efforts to grasp the essence of history and civilization.

Nor am I alone in holding this view. Historian Kentaro Hayashi, for instance, observing Toynbee’s engaged discussions with many Japanese scholars during his visit to Japan in 1956, wrote as follows:

What matters most to Dr. Toynbee is not so much the number of civilizations and their rise and fall, as the essential quality of human spirit that builds a civilization and the inner determination required of us if we are to rescue contemporary civilization from catastrophe.¹¹

To understand Toynbee better, let us look at his essay, “Civilization on Trial,” which offers a succinct summary of his view of history. In it Toynbee considers the time frame that is

necessary in order to grasp the deep currents of history, and to place in perspective the many shocking incidents and ceaseless changes that have marked our own era. He sets himself the task of describing how future historians will look back upon our age:

The things that make good headlines attract our attention because they are on the surface of the stream of life, and they distract our attention from the slower, impalpable, imponderable movements that work below the surface and penetrate to the depths. But of course it is really these deeper, slower movements that, in the end, make history, and it is they that stand out huge in retrospect, when the sensational passing events have dwindled, in perspective, to their true proportions.¹²

Reading this passage, I am especially struck by Toynbee's insight that it is the "deeper, slower movements" beneath the surface that make history.

The expression "deeper, slower movements" is a subtle and perhaps ambiguous but certainly skillful turn of phrase that was maybe the only one available to him as a historian. I feel strongly, however, that what Toynbee sought to indicate by that phrase is closely aligned with the concept of existential time or "life-time."

I feel further that somewhere deep in his being, Toynbee's ear must have been carefully attuned to the "summons of heroes" at each juncture of history. In my view, the words of any religion that cannot respond to and complement the insights of such a superlative historian betray the tradition of deductive reasoning; they are mere dogma.

I recall a memorable remark made by Toynbee during our dialogue in London. A TV news program had just reported, with much pomp and circumstance, the visit to England of a certain country's prime minister. "That event is but a passing phenomenon," he said to me with detachment, "but our dialogue, while a simple affair, seeks to profit future generations of humanity. For the sake of their future, let us speak, sharing our thoughts."

IMPACT OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

In this essay, published in 1947, Toynbee takes a long-term perspective, first of one hundred years on, and then finally of three thousand years into the future:

Future historians will say, I think, that the great event of the twentieth century was the impact of the Western civilization upon all the other living societies of the world of that day.¹³

Following this indisputable statement, he writes from the point of view of historians one century later, in the year 2047:

They will say of this impact that it was so powerful and so pervasive that it turned the lives of all its victims upside down and inside out.¹⁴

Today we stand at the halfway point between the year 1947 and 2047, and we see much in the world around us that confirms his view, written half a century ago. Compared with the order which prevailed within the communal societies of premodern peoples (and suspending any judgment as to the quality of that order), the state of our postmodern world is far from orderly—it has indeed literally been turned "upside down and inside out."

Then, Toynbee's hypothesis moves suddenly to the perspective of one thousand years in the future. The historians of the year 3047, he declares, will "be chiefly interested in the tremendous counter-effects":

By A.D. 3047, our Western civilization, as we and our Western predecessors have known it, say, for the last twelve or thirteen hundred years, since its emergence out of the Dark Ages, may have been transformed, almost out of all recognition, by a counter-radiation of influences from the foreign worlds which we, in our day, are in the act of engulfing in ours—influences from Orthodox Christendom, from Islam, from Hinduism, from the Far East.¹⁵

And then after another one thousand years pass by, he says:

The historians of A.D. 4047 will say that the impact of the Western civilization on its contemporaries, in the second half of the second millennium of the Christian era, was the epoch-making event of that age because it was the first step towards the unification of mankind into one single society. By their time, the unity of mankind will perhaps have come to seem one of the fundamental conditions of human life— just part of the order of nature...¹⁶

In Toynbee's view, therefore, it will take that long before the globalism or globalization of which we speak today, principally in terms of global economic integration, will be based on an unforced awareness among global citizens that we share a common destiny as passengers on what has been termed "spaceship Earth." Then another one thousand years elapse:

The historians of A.D. 5047 will say, I fancy, that the importance of this social unification of mankind was not to be found in the field of technics and economics, and not in the field of war and politics, but in the field of religion.¹⁷

This is a truly sweeping perspective, grand and far-reaching, as befits one of the twentieth century's greatest historians.

Yet 1947, when it was written, was the year the United States adopted the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan as part of its efforts to contain the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Soviet Union set up the Cominform in response, and began hinting at the production of nuclear weapons. Amid the continuing turmoil in the wake of World War II, the dark clouds of the East-West confrontation were already gathering.

We cannot overlook the significance of Toynbee's vision, enunciated at a time when people were far more preoccupied with immediate concerns and influenced by shortsighted interests. His vision is of so grand a scale that it may easily be dismissed as fantasy, insufficiently corroborated in fact. Indeed, his macroscopic view has been attacked as the product not of a historian but of a fatalistic visionary.

Certainly, when Toynbee wrote this essay, the threat of apocalypse by nuclear war or collapse of the global environment, which has put into question the very survival of humankind into the twenty-first century—much less a thousand or two thousand years beyond that—was far smaller than it is today.

FOUR-DIMENSIONAL WORLD CITIZENS

Yet the vision of the future offered by this great historian and critic of civilization stands on a totally different plane from the prophecies of such mystics or self-styled prophets as Nostradamus. Toynbee's selection of the year 1947 as his starting point and his use of units of one thousand years are rough approximations that may be considered chiefly rhetorical. His substantive statements, however, represent conclusions based on an in-depth study of actual historical instances of inter-civilizational confrontation.

According to his view, articulated at a time when the Cold War was beginning to intensify, "this Russian counter-discharge in the form of Communism may come to seem a small affair when the probably far more potent civilizations of India and China respond in their turn to our Western challenge."¹⁸ Today, fifty years later, most of us would agree that his appraisal was not that far off the mark.

I would also like to briefly introduce the insights of another individual for whom I have immense respect: Lord Yehudi Menuhin, perhaps this century's premier violinist.

When I met Lord Menuhin six years ago in Tokyo, I was moved by the sense of his resonant humanism, his profound learning and his pan-civilizational outlook that transcends the conventional definition of an artist. In a 1962 essay entitled "World Citizen," he makes this rather unusual suggestion: "Let us look into the future first, and see what the world citizen of

the year 5000 may be. And then we shall see in what ways we can begin to take the various stages that lead to that ultimate.”¹⁹

It is interesting that, paralleling Toynbee, he chooses the year 5000 as his point of departure. From that perspective, he argues that world citizens should be “four-dimensional” and ascribes to them four essential qualities. First is a sense of responsibility for history, seeing themselves as “responsible for the links of the past as well as for those of the future.” Second is an awareness of geographical space that has nothing to do with national boundaries. Third is awareness “of all creation, of all the manifestations of life.” Fourth is belief in and respect for their own humanity.²⁰

Menuhin’s mode of expression is somewhat different from Toynbee’s, and his thoughtful phrasing reflects the refined sensibilities of an artist. I will not go into this further here, except to say that his disinclination to pin things down with specific labels is reminiscent of the idea of *shusseken* (transcending the definitions and constraints of words) in Buddhism.

Be that as it may, I feel that there is great value in the kinds of vast scales and spans of time in which thinkers such as Toynbee or Menuhin view history. They can help us, unused to considering things without and beyond the constraints of words, to grasp the meaning of Nichiren’s promise that his teachings “will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity.”

From now on, any system of beliefs that is to thrive as a world religion must take this kind of long-term outlook on the history of humankind. At the same time, it must bring into sharp focus those concrete steps that need to be taken at this moment. In other words, knowing that the causes that exist in the present will bear fruit in the future, we have to know where to devote our present efforts, and religion must provide a guide in this.

What matters then is that we move forward with courage and conviction, our sights set calmly on the future millennia hence, looking past the constantly changing surface, the short-term tides of praise and censure in the realms of politics, economy, science or military affairs. Only when we take this kind of perspective can genuine optimism prevail.

TOWARD NEW MODES OF COMPETITION

In June 1997, the UN General Assembly Special Session on the Environment and Development was held in New York, with the aim of reviewing progress made since the 1992 “Earth Summit” held in Rio de Janeiro, and in December the Third Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP3) was convened in Kyoto. Although some progress was made, both conferences achieved less than had been hoped. Even so, I believe that the COP3 meeting on global warming and similar events have succeeded in the important task of attracting increasing attention to these issues. They provide the opportunity to bring into focus and question the core modalities of contemporary civilization through the lens of our efforts to manage the earth’s ecosystem.

The continued existence of environmental and other global threats pushes us to start regarding ourselves as neighbors in an emerging global community who indeed will share a “common future,” irrespective of national or ethnic differences. At the same time, we are forced to give serious thought to the challenges of globalization, a process without precedent in human history.

As many observers have noted, present modes of globalization lack the crucial quality of reciprocity, of free and mutual exchange among all societies. Rather, globalization appears to be a one-way radiation of influence from the leading industrialized countries out to the rest of the world. While we see waves of democratization and market economics spreading worldwide, these have been accompanied by an uprooting of the culture and values that have long supported different communities and societies, thus sowing new seeds of instability. At the heart of the problem, in my view, is the lack of an effective international framework of rules or standards to guide the process of globalization.

If present patterns of globalization continue, we will see advancing information technologies promoting a form of political and economic standardization and unification. On

the other hand, however, the many countries and peoples who fail to adapt successfully to these waves of technological innovation and competition face the prospect of permanent marginalization. A growing population of the marginalized victims of discrimination and alienation will contribute to increased strife and terror, giving rise to new movements of refugees and displaced people. Such cycles of alienation and violence are undeniably possible outcomes of globalization. The adverse aspects of globalization obviously become more pronounced in the face of the threat of global recession.

CONSTELLATION OF CULTURES

In my view, the deeper roots of our contemporary crisis are to be found in an arbitrary and one-dimensional value system that measures every endeavor of humankind against the yardstick of “progress.” At a symposium held in January 1997 on challenges of the third millennium, Italian philosopher Umberto Eco offered important insights on this issue.

The symbol of the last two millennia, he said, was an arrow. The concept of time that originated in Judeo-Christian monotheism has been marked by a clear directionality, of which “progress” is one expression. The symbol for the third millennium, he declared, should rather be that of a constellation—a society based on respect for the value of cultural pluralism.²¹

The image of a constellation is an apt one. It evokes the brilliance of many individual stars. Their grouping together creates a beautiful constellation, and yet each star’s beauty is not impaired; on the contrary, the splendor of the night sky lies in the combination of their diversity. This image is much like the Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination, as symbolized by a vast net sparkling with countless jewels suspended above the palace of Indra.²² Applying this metaphor to human society, the stars represent individual human beings, the constellation is the culture which they collectively produce, and the vast expanse of the sky represents a global community of flourishing diversity.

It should be noted that a society of respect for diverse cultures does not imply the unconditional acceptance of all cultures and cultural practices. Such an approach might succeed in protecting specific groups from the forces of cultural homogenization. If, however, inhuman acts and practices are condoned in the name of culture, the price of preserving such “culture,” in terms of suffering, will be paid by real human beings.

On the other hand, to give a position of centrality to a particular culture, considering its values absolute and universal, is to create an artificial and unhealthy ranking or hierarchy of cultures. What we should pursue, therefore, is not a world order based on the universalization of certain specific values (as in Francis Fukuyama’s “The End of History?”²³) or one which sees cultures in ceaseless conflict (as in Samuel Huntington’s “The Clash of Civilizations?”²⁴). Rather, we must seek the “third path,” a global civilization whose core values are tolerance and coexistence. To reach this difficult goal, I believe that we must first attempt to identify those values and norms that inform the deepest layers of every culture and which, I am confident, are in their essence more similar than different.

Czech President Vaclav Havel spoke of this need in an article that appeared in the Japanese press a year ago.²⁵ After discussing various aspects of the crisis of the present age, he declares, “A single, all-embracing global civilization has arisen.” The only meaningful way to lift humankind out of the recurrent conflict and strife caused by the forces of homogenization is, he argues, “to set upon changing our civilization into one that is multicultural in the real sense of the word, which would enable all to be what they want to be, and which would not only try to seek ways toward a tolerant, multicultural coexistence, but also lead to a more articulate definition of what relates all people and what will allow, through a shared set of values and norms, their coexistence to be creative.” He declares that an urgent task is “the resuscitation of fundamental ethics.”

Even as we pursue the ideal of cultural pluralism, we cannot overlook the existence of those values that are truly universal and which must be protected against the encroachments of relativism. These are not, however, externally imposed norms but values that reside in, and are inherent to, the lives of all people. Religious faith can provide the impetus for the

clarification and strengthening of such values, and the capacity to do this is, in my view, the most essential criterion for any world religion of the future.

HUMANITARIAN COMPETITION

This discussion brings to mind the future set out by Soka Gakkai's founding president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi in his *Jinsei Chirigaku* (The Geography of Human Life), written in 1903. At that time, the Great Powers were all pursuing policies of expanding industrial and military might in a worldwide competition for hegemony; the impact of imperialism and colonialism was being felt throughout the world. It is against this background that he classified the struggles for survival among nations into four types of competition—military, political, economic and humanitarian—and argued that the world could no longer afford military, political, or economic rivalries but should shift its energies to competing on a humanitarian plane.

I am drawn to Makiguchi's vision in that he does more than predict a shift in the modes and locus of competition; he foresees and requires a transformation in the very nature of competition, from that whose essence is confrontation to that whose baseline is cooperation.

At the heart of humanitarian competition is the extension of the spiritual influence—of cultural achievement and moral persuasion—that a country or people exerts on the world. In today's terms this might be described as expansion of our "soft-power" competitiveness. He writes:

Military and political power—sometimes under the cloak of economic strength—that pursues territorial expansion, seeking to place as many people as possible under its influence, should be supplanted by those intangible forces that naturally inspire people's respect... Rather than responding to the force of threat, people will offer their support willingly and without reserve.

He continues:

There is no simple formula for this humanitarianism. Rather, all activities, whether in the realm of politics or of economics, should be conducted in conformity with the principles of humanitarianism. What is important is to eschew egotistical actions, striving to protect and improve not only your own life but others' as well. One should do things for the sake of others, for by benefiting others, we benefit ourselves. This means, in other words, to engage consciously in collective life.²⁶

He thus suggests that humanitarian competition will influence other forms of competition, which will in turn bring about a shift in people's consciousness from competition to coexistence and cooperation.

The Group of Lisbon, an international council which presents policy recommendations, includes the noteworthy observation in its recent publication, *Limits to Competition*, that although competition originally meant "seeking together," it has come to denote defeating or triumphing over others. As this example indicates, we hear more and more voices calling for a reexamination of the meaning of competition.

In a message sent to a correspondent in Japan, Toynbee made a statement similar to that of Makiguchi. At a time when peoples with very different traditions, faiths and ideals have come into sudden and close contact with one another, wrote Toynbee, the survival of humankind requires that people be willing to live with one another and to accept that there is more than one path to truth and salvation.²⁷

This willingness to live and let live is reinforced if we adopt Makiguchi's more proactive stance, that "by benefiting others, we benefit ourselves." This point is the touchstone for the formation of twenty-first-century globalism, and is also the tough challenge that no world religion can avoid if it is to be worthy of the name and if it is to fulfill what I see as the true role

of faith—providing the profound spiritual flows that will support a mutually beneficial globalism.

Toynbee stressed the importance of an acceptance that there is more than one path to truth and salvation. Indeed, it is abundantly clear that a stubborn adherence to religious dogma will only exacerbate confrontation and rivalry among peoples, perpetuating humankind's long and bloody history of religious strife and persecution.

Toynbee did not, of course, mean by this that people should not assert their own views of the world, of the universe, or of their religious faith. We are free to assert our views, but only as far as this is compatible with the spirit of living and letting live, the spirit of tolerance and nonviolence that we of the SGI consider the very heart of humanism. Even as Toynbee held out the possibility that humankind may one day be united in the same faith, he laid down strict guidelines for the propagation of religion, declaring that acceptance of any new faith could only be the result of the free choice of countless individuals.²⁸ This idea coincides with what Makiguchi referred to as compliance given “willingly and without reserve.”

WINNERS AND LOSERS

The global gap between rich and poor was once discussed in terms of the rich North versus the poor South. Today, however, against a backdrop of increasingly fierce global economic competition, we find strains between strong and weak, winners and losers, within both North and South, as well as within individual countries in both hemispheres. The stark realities of an “eat or be eaten” world draw into question the very meaning and intent of a civilization whose acknowledged commitment has always been to “progress.” Certainly, in this regard, Makiguchi's admonition, that it is time to vie with each other not for power or money, but for achievement of humanitarian goals, offers the kind of farsighted vision around which we may successfully order humankind's affairs in the coming millennium.

Professor Hugh de Santis of the National Defense Academy in Washington writes:

Just how conflictual the passage from progress to mutualism will be is likely to be a function of three concurrent conditions: the capability of revisionist states to wage war; the tolerance, generosity, and security vigilance of rich states and influential institutions; and the predisposition of poor states to evaluate their interests in inclusivist rather than exclusivist terms.²⁹

Setting aside the first condition, the last two eloquently show that the future depends upon whether both rich and poor countries can, in their own way, possess the spirit of “what benefits others can benefit ourselves” and “live and let live.”

The building of a world community, a global civilization of justice, compassion and hope must begin by turning away from the “eat or be eaten” ethos of competition and cultivating in its place a shared ethos of cooperation and interdependence—which is in fact closer to the original sense of the word competition.

In this regard, I would like to propose the concept of shared or mutual value-creation as a behavioral norm for the new era. In concrete terms, I would like to suggest that we review and renew the summit meetings of the major industrial democracies (the G-7).

SUMMIT OF RESPONSIBLE STATES

At the Lyon Summit in June 1996, under a thematic banner of “globalization for the benefit of all,”³⁰ the G-7 leaders for the first time gave serious attention to both the positive and the negative aspects of globalization. The following June, at the Denver Summit, they announced the “G-7 Statement on Economic and Financial Issues,” in which they declared: “Our goal is to realize the full benefits of globalization for all while meeting the challenges it presents.”³¹ I cannot help feeling that the Denver gathering, at which the Russian Federation participated virtually as a full member, has brought the summit meetings to an important turning point.

From the first meeting in 1975, the summits were held with a view to strengthening and underscoring the unity of the leading Western states within the context of the ongoing Cold War conflict. Following the end of the Cold War, Russia was granted limited participation, but the basic purpose—displaying G-7 solidarity—remained unchanged. This history adds to the significance of recent changes. Some observers see the shift from G-7 to G-8 made at the Denver meeting as the first step toward making the summits a genuinely global affair. To encourage these nascent positive trends, I would like to propose that the meetings be expanded to include such countries as China and India and that the group make a new departure as the “Summit of Responsible States.”

The new summit would be a place where the leaders of these states might discuss without reserve issues of common concern, and where they could develop a sense of shared responsibility. I propose including China and India for two reasons. The first is that their combined population is expected to reach one-third of the entire population of the world in the near future, a development which in itself merits our attention. The second reason is that, over the course of their extremely long histories, both countries have been made up of numerous ethnic groups and have had to deal with the challenges of highly diverse populations.

I feel that the term “responsible states” should be included in the name of the summit, because I am convinced that global issues will never be resolved until the world’s leading states begin thinking not only of their own national interests, but demonstrate a concern for the benefit of humankind as a whole. As some have pointed out, the greatest deficiency in the current system of nation-states is that there are too few voices that speak for the global public interest.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY, DIVERSITY IN UNITY

In the face of the seemingly irreversible tide of globalization, we must meet the urgent task of creating a civilization that will embody what Toynbee called “unity in diversity and diversity in unity.”³² This is a need stressed not only by Toynbee but by many world leaders, including former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and the late Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

In his epilogue to the book that will record our recent discussions, Gorbachev stressed the importance of a world of diversity, urging that we not permit the post-Cold War world to be painted solely in the shades of economic liberalism and Americanism.³³ Rajiv Gandhi likewise emphasized that the vibrant reality of unity in diversity is India’s greatest single contribution to world civilization.³⁴

It is my belief that education, in the broadest sense of the word, holds the key to meeting the challenges of global responsibility and fostering the spirit of tolerance. Education does not mean coercing people to fit one rigid and unvaried mold; this is mere ideological indoctrination. Rather, it represents the most effective means of fostering the positive potential inherent in all people—self-restraint, empathy for others and the unique personality and character of each person. To do this, education must be a personal, even spiritual encounter and interaction between human beings, between teacher and learner.

The teachings of Buddhism employ the analogy of flowering fruit trees—cherry, plum, pear, etc.—each blossoming and bearing fruit in its own unique way, to express the value of diversity. Each living thing, in other words, has a distinct character, individuality, and purpose in this world. Accordingly, people should develop their own unique capabilities as they work to build a world of cooperation where all people acknowledge both their differences and their fundamental equality, a world where a rich diversity of peoples and cultures is nourished, each enjoying respect and harmony.

A related Buddhist principle is *jitai kensho*, which means to give full and creative expression to the intrinsic individuality of the self, without clashing with or preying on the individuality of others. It teaches that the true way of living is found in compassion, learning

from each other's differences how to grow and improve ourselves and thereby creating a realm of happiness woven of harmony and coexistence.

The late Dr. David L. Norton, the respected American philosopher who was well versed in the educational philosophy of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, shared his view of the Buddhist model of diversity in a 1991 address:

For the reorganized world that must come, our responsibility as educators is to cultivate in our students a sensibility of respect and appreciation of cultures, beliefs, and practices that differ from their own. This can only be done on the basis of the recognition that other cultures, beliefs, and practices embody aspects of truth and goodness, as the blossoms of the cherry tree, the sour plum, the sweet plum, and the pear tree each embody beauty in a distinctive aspect. To achieve this means that our students must abandon the supposition that the beliefs and practices with which they are most familiar have a monopoly on truth and goodness. This supposition is called parochialism, or narrow-mindedness when it is the innocent result of ignorance, but it breeds the aggressive absolutism of the "closed society" mentality.³⁵

Soon after World War II, as the East-West ideological confrontation escalated, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda spoke of the underlying unity of the human race, calling for the realization of a "global family." His appeal grew from the same roots as what today is called "world citizenship" and sought to transcend the constraints of self-centered and bigoted nationalism. There are, of course, those who believe a clash of civilizations to be unavoidable. My view is that such a clash would not occur between civilizations, but between the savage elements that lurk within each civilization. If people from different cultural traditions are willing to work over time to build tolerant and enduring links, rather than indulging in the temptation to dominate and forcibly influence others, the very nature of culture is such that humanity will be enriched by their interaction, and their differences will give birth to new values.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The role of religion must be to provide the wisdom which can propel the effort toward mutual development and improvement. In this connection, Buddhism teaches that one meaning of *myo* (mystic) is "to open."³⁶ The constant seeking after improvement and growth, the desire to open up latent potentialities is a special characteristic of human life. What is urgently sought today is religion that responds to this desire for growth and fulfillment.

The sad historical reality, however, is one of endless strife, bloodshed and tragedy originating from religion and religious differences. As Nichiren wrote, "The true path of life lies in the affairs of this world."³⁷ I interpret this as meaning that if we are to avoid repeating the errors of the past, religions must give first priority to serving the needs of real people in their daily lives and finding solutions to the problems facing human society. In this way, they must provide the spiritual basis for peaceful competition.

A hopeful future can be opened up by overcoming what Toda criticized as narrow self-centeredness and by promoting the humanitarian competition that Makiguchi advocated, the shared work of value-creation among people committed to living together as global neighbors. Indeed, this is the core objective of the SGI's movement of what we call "human revolution."

While the trend toward globalization appears to be firmly established, what must concern us even more is the kind of world that will be the result of this reordering. Directing the processes of globalization toward a new era of respect for the sanctity of life and of the human being—the vision embraced by Makiguchi and Toda which is currently pursued by SGI—requires a revolution at the deepest core of each human life. In this sense, our efforts

must be focused on the “deeper, slower movements” that Toynbee saw as fundamental to the making of history.

Last year the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution proclaiming the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. It is time that we return to the question of humanity—the starting point of every endeavor—as we seek to formulate a set of clear, basic principles on which to build a culture of peace. I am fully confident that if people everywhere engage in sincere dialogue in order to identify a common basis for belief and action, and if all people join as equal partners in the endeavor to create a culture of peace, we will witness the dawn of humankind’s third millennium as an era in which happiness can be enjoyed by all.

I was moved by such sentiments when I urged support last year for the adoption of an Earth Charter.³⁸ Such a document will give voice to the general will of humankind and offer eloquent proof of our courage, wisdom and solidarity in the face of the challenges that confront us. In support of the efforts of the Earth Charter Commission, the SGI-affiliated Boston Research Center for the 21st Century is working to deepen and broaden discussions toward the finalization of the language of the Earth Charter. I have high expectations for this process, as I believe that the Earth Charter can provide an important stepping-stone toward a future global civilization.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ROLE OF NGOS

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Adopted in December 1948, this historic document proclaims in its Preamble that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

This Declaration, which contains so much in a mere thirty articles, is considered “soft law,” a resolution without binding force. Nonetheless it has, over the last fifty years, served as the international community’s effective standard on questions of human rights. It has also given birth to numerous international human rights conventions, including the International Covenants on Human Rights. As of September 1997, no fewer than twenty-three multilateral human rights treaties had been drafted and adopted under UN auspices. The number of resolutions, statements and declarations dealing with human rights issues, of course, exceeds that number many times over.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has come to occupy a unique place in international society, to the extent that it is said to carry the weight of international customary law. The extraordinary significance of this document in human history is a topic I discussed with Austregésilo de Athayde,³⁹ late president of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, who played an important role in its drafting.

International human rights treaties can be said to differ in a fundamental sense from other international law. The principle of reciprocity—the principle that one country’s observance of treaty conditions requires other signatory countries’ reciprocal observance—is said not to apply in the case of human rights conventions.⁴⁰ In other words, since human rights conventions are aimed at securing universal human rights, they contain elements that transcend some of the limitations of agreements undertaken between states, including the generally sacrosanct principle of nonintervention in the domestic affairs of another state. In this sense, international human rights law represents a limitation and tempering of traditional concepts of national sovereignty.

Likewise, many of the concrete measures that have been adopted—from the establishment of international tribunals, various committees and commissions responsible for overseeing the implementation of treaties, to systems for reporting human rights abuses—represent important, if limited, steps toward the establishment of a supranational system of human rights protection and promotion.

However, international accords and the resulting structure of human rights law are not in themselves sufficient to bring about any tangible improvements in the lives of individuals

whose rights are being infringed. The tragic reality of human rights violations and abuses can be found everywhere; the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has yet to become a reality for people around the world in equal measure.

For many years, there has been agreement that the human rights agenda must move beyond standard setting; true implementation must begin. Needless to say, the path to universal implementation of human rights standards is strewn with difficulties. As one possible means of overcoming these obstacles, I would propose a network of human rights agencies, present in each national setting yet with a status independent of the national government, charged with implementing the human rights agreements which that state has signed.

The work of these agencies would include compiling reports on national efforts to implement international human rights treaties, fostering public awareness of human rights, and working to secure redress in specific cases. The essence of this plan is to create a new framework of transnational cooperation, involving national human rights agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and competent UN bodies, in order to make existing human rights agreements most effective.

The idea of national human rights agencies has had advocates within the UN for some time now, and in some countries institutions independent of the national judiciary have been established in the form of ombudspersons or human rights commissions. As a means of reinforcing and accelerating this trend, I would like to take up the idea of “transgovernmentalism” advocated by Harvard Law School professor Anne-Marie Slaughter as a new form of international cooperation. To this idea, I would like to add some suggestions which might enhance its participatory aspects. In essence, transgovernmentalism as proposed by Professor Slaughter is a system that transcends individual states but which differs from traditional multilateral arrangements in that it involves lateral, functional linkages between the similarly charged agencies in different states.

Professor Slaughter writes, “Disaggregating the state permits the disaggregation of sovereignty as well, ensuring that specific state institutions derive strength and status from participation in a transgovernmental order.”⁴¹ The idea of disaggregated national sovereignty holds the promise of providing what would be the critical element required for the effective functioning of the network of agencies I am proposing—namely their independence and impartiality.

I do not completely agree with every aspect of Slaughter’s idea, however. I am concerned that she posits transgovernmentalism as the only alternative to either liberal internationalism or neo-medievalism. In my view, in developing a new global order, we should feel free to choose from a range of visions, incorporating their useful aspects in a mutually supportive manner. Still, she sets forth a number of important ideas, emphasizing, for example, the centrality of such qualities as efficacy and accountability in any international framework for the resolution of global issues.

While these may be the necessary conditions for establishing human rights agencies, they are not in themselves sufficient to assure success. The Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights states in its principles that they should be established in a way that ensures pluralist representation of civil society, through the participation and cooperation of NGOs. As this shows, the work of NGOs, which have played a vitally important role in the area of human rights, should not be undervalued. It would be imperative for the national human rights agencies I am proposing to develop constructive partnerships with NGOs. These relationships would help assure the accountability of the agencies while enhancing their legitimacy.

It is clearly time to advance the relationship between NGOs and governments beyond the adversarial one that presently pertains, in which governments regard NGOs with disfavor and occasionally with open hostility. The time has come for mutual recognition of the respective roles of NGOs and governments and for them to work together—ideally in a relationship of creative tension—to promote human rights. However, care must be exercised to ensure that

such cooperation does not leave NGOs in the position of “subcontractors,” carrying out the work that governments would rather, for whatever reason, not do themselves.

I would also like to propose that the technical training programs currently conducted by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) for government employees be expanded to include the participation of those responsible for national human rights agencies and the staff of the NGOs alongside whom they will be working. This would not only provide a regular venue for ongoing exchange between the three groups but would also encourage a deeper understanding of the ideals and goals of the UN and facilitate policy coordination with UN agencies.

HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE

Alongside the need for an improved institutional framework, there must be a parallel effort to create a robust culture of human rights. Simply put, this means cultivating the awareness that human rights are not something special, but norms of behavior that should be accepted and adhered to everywhere. While such an effort will take time, in the end it will be the most effective way of closing the gap between the ideal of human rights and the reality.

There are distinct signs that such an effort is finally under way. As one outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993, the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, was established. Likewise, human rights education is one of the important objectives of the UNHCHR, which was also established in the wake of the World Conference. Thus we see the creation of a human rights culture emerging as a common theme and concern of the international community.

In order to support this endeavor, the SGI has actively sought to promote human rights education. The exhibition “Toward a Century of Humanity—An Overview of Human Rights in Today’s World,” for example, was first shown at the United Nations University in Tokyo in April 1993. It has since been shown in twenty-one cities in seven countries, including Geneva in December 1993, as one of the events commemorating the 45th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The SGI has also sponsored exhibitions on children’s rights, the Holocaust and other human rights issues.

We also see renewed recognition of the overarching importance of human rights within the UN itself. This is encouraging, as the UN is the natural focal point for humanity’s shared efforts to secure human rights. A report released by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in July 1997, *Renewing the United Nations: A Program for Reform*, states that, “Human rights are integral to the promotion of peace and security, economic prosperity, and social equity,” and that, “A major task for the United Nations, therefore, is to enhance its human rights program and fully integrate it into the broad range of the Organization’s activities.” This fresh prioritization of human rights at the United Nations and the positioning of the issue at the heart of the question of UN reform merits our attention. It can be thought of as an effort to rectify the many years of relative isolation of human rights concerns within the UN and to respond to the many calls for comprehensive efforts to effectively assure the observance of human rights standards.

International support for universal human rights is clearly growing. It is now five years since the World Conference on Human Rights was held in Vienna, and an interim review is due to be conducted of the progress made toward the achievement of the goals set out at that Conference.

This year should therefore be one in which we renew our commitment to the future, and launch substantive actions. Among the many proposals made by those sincerely determined not to permit this great opportunity to pass by unexploited, I am particularly struck by a plan formulated by the Inter Action Council, an organization of former heads of government, among them former West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt and former Costa Rican president Oscar Arias Sanchez. The group proposes the adoption of a “Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities”⁴² by the UN as a document complementing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and as an aid in our efforts to create a better world.

Article 1 of the proposed declaration states, "Every person, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, social status, political opinion, language, age, nationality, or religion, has a responsibility to treat all people in a humane way." Running through all nineteen articles of the declaration is a determination to balance the notions of freedom and responsibility. One especially striking clause calls on us to "move away from the freedom of indifference towards the freedom of involvement."

I find much to agree with in the Inter Action Council's proposal. The challenge that faces us is that of establishing the kind of ethics it proposes in the midst of society's complex realities.

ALTRUISM IN PRACTICE

In this regard, I recall a response made by the late Linus Pauling following a talk I gave at Claremont McKenna College in January 1993. At that time, he expressed his sense of the importance to humankind of attaining and acting in accordance with what Buddhism calls the bodhisattva life-state, to which I had referred in my talk.

University of Hawaii professor David W. Chappell has also noted the bodhisattva way of life taught in the Buddhist tradition, and extensively discusses its significance to the contemporary world in an essay titled "The Public Role of the Bodhisattva."⁴³

What then is this concept of the bodhisattva, which has attracted the attention of such distinguished thinkers? The bodhisattva, in short, exemplifies the state of compassion, or altruistic life, and a person in this state aspires to help all people gain happiness, seeking, in Nichiren's words, "to attain enlightenment only after having first saved others from suffering."⁴⁴

The qualities that make a bodhisattva can be described from various perspectives, but here I would mention one that is of particular relevance to human rights. The bodhisattva undertakes a vow to save others and bases all action upon this vow, which is a spontaneous and unforced expression of altruism. Nor is the vow a mere expression of determination or desire, but a defining commitment to whose realization the bodhisattva devotes her or his entire being. The bodhisattva refuses to be dissuaded or discouraged by the difficulties posed by this challenge. The Lotus Sutra speaks of the pure white lotus rising from the waters of a muddy pond. This analogy illustrates the attainment of a pure and empowered state of life in the midst of the sometimes degrading realities of human society. In this way, the bodhisattva never tries to escape from reality, never leaves suffering people unsaved and plunges into the turbulent waters of life in the effort to help each person drowning in suffering onto the great vessel of happiness.

Another Buddhist scripture describes the vow of Shrimala, the daughter of King Prasenajit and a contemporary of Shakyamuni Buddha:

If I see lonely people, people who have been jailed unjustly and have lost their freedom, people who are suffering from illness, disaster or poverty, I will not abandon them. I will bring them spiritual and material comfort.⁴⁵

True to her vow, she worked throughout her life for the benefit of others, striving always to bring forth the inner goodness that exists in all people.

My point in introducing the concept of the bodhisattva is this: Human rights will only become truly universal and indivisible when they span the most basic, existential division—that of self and other. And this can only occur when both the right to and duty of humane treatment are observed, not in response to externally imposed norms, but through spontaneous action stemming from the naturally powerful desire to assist our fellows whose ability to live in a humane manner is under threat.

In this regard, I would like to introduce the words of Upendra Baxi, an Indian law scholar, in his "Human Rights Education: The Promise of the Third Millennium?":

The single most critical source of human rights is the consciousness of peoples of the world who have waged the most persistent struggles for

decolonization and self-determination, against racial discrimination, gender-based aggression and discrimination, denial of access to basic minimum needs, environmental degradation and destruction, systematic “benign neglect” of the disarticulated, disadvantaged and dispossessed (including the indigenous peoples of the Earth).⁴⁶

The similarity of the concerns expressed in this remark and Shrimala’s bodhisattva vow is striking indeed.

INNER MOTIVATION

Buddhism stresses the quality of our motivation, valuing that which issues spontaneously from within, as expressed in the simple phrase, “Our heart is what matters most.”⁴⁷ It teaches that the ultimate objective of Shakyamuni’s life was revealed in the humanity he manifested in his behavior and actions. Thus the cultivation and perfection of a person’s character is considered in the Buddhist tradition to be the true goal of religious training. Norms that are not inner-generated and do not encourage the development of individual character are ultimately weak and ineffective. Only when external norms and inner values function in a mutually supportive manner can they enable people to resist evil and live as genuine advocates and champions of human rights.

Over half a century ago, at the height of Japanese militarism, Soka Gakkai’s founding president Makiguchi declared, “Rejecting evil and embracing good are two actions born of the same impulse.” He also said, “Only a person courageous enough to fight against evil can be a true friend of the good,” and, “It is not enough to indulge passively in goodness; we must have the moral courage actively to pursue good.” In this way Makiguchi launched a critique of the militarist regime which trampled human rights as it carried out its wars of invasion. In the face of constant persecution, he never yielded an inch, holding firm to his beliefs up to the moment of his death in prison. I derive profound personal inspiration from the struggles that culminated in his martyrdom; I feel that it is here that we can find the spiritual wellsprings of the SGI’s current activities to promote human rights.

Just twenty-three years ago I appealed to members of the newly-formed SGI, saying, “Let us not seek praise or glory for ourselves, but instead dedicate our lives to sowing the seeds of the Mystic Law for peace everywhere in the world.” Just as unhappiness is not something only others suffer, neither can happiness be for ourselves only. In this sense, my appeal was a cry from the depths of my heart that we should live the bodhisattva way of life: overcoming the ego, developing an extended, more inclusive sense of self—seeing ourselves in others and feeling others to be part of ourselves.

As responsible citizens of their respective societies, the members of the SGI are working to advance a movement for peace, culture, and education. In the immediate context of their daily lives, they act with the bodhisattva spirit, refusing to ignore or abandon those who suffer. They initiate and carry out countless acts for the benefit of others, striving to encourage this person, to relieve the anguish of that person, and to help those around them. I am proud of them and believe theirs are the kind of quiet, grass-roots endeavors that will certainly help to create the human rights culture that our times demand.

It is my belief that if we can foster, in the depths of each individual human life, the kind of active, independent basis for altruistic behavior exemplified in the bodhisattva’s vow, we can establish the fundamental basis for an ethic of responsibility and commitment, upon which a genuine culture of human rights can flourish. This is because the inner motivation that spurs people to act in the face of threats to human dignity is, for human rights, the most crucial supporting and sustaining force.

As was evident in the sharp division of views at the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the issue of the universality of human rights is not fully resolved and requires careful and sensitive treatment. As I have tried to describe through my discussion of the bodhisattva ideal, I believe that when people spontaneously undertake to live by those norms which they find most desirable, and to the extent to which they bring their actual behavior in line with

those norms, human rights can transcend the limitations of an externally imposed regime and, as internalized values, become a force for the transformation of reality. In that sense, it is vitally important that dialogue be undertaken to promote a new synthesis between the views of those who argue for the universality of rights and those who consider them embedded in cultural relativism. It is only through such dialogue that a genuinely universal understanding of human rights can be reached and the conditions created by which human rights can be implemented equally and without distinction among all the Earth's inhabitants.

END THE ERA OF NUCLEAR ARMS!

Three hundred and fifty years have passed since the Peace of Westphalia, which laid the foundations for the contemporary international political order centered on the nation-state. By now it is clear that such a framework alone is inadequate to cope with problems of a global scale.

As one example, despite long-standing calls for a permanent court capable of trying individuals who violate international laws against genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, no such body has been established. In recognition of the pervasive sense that the international community's response to the situation in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and elsewhere was woefully inadequate, steps have been taken leading to an international conference in Rome this June, where it is expected that an international criminal court will be created.

This court will be a judicial body that will not only hold individuals accountable for crimes against international humanitarian and human rights law, but will also provide legal redress to the victims of such crimes. I myself have been eager to see such a court established as a pillar around which the "international law of peace" can be enhanced and elaborated.⁴⁸

Humanitarian issues are not restricted to the scope of any single country, and the awareness is finally emerging that they must be dealt with through coordinated international efforts. Attempts to create the new systems and bodies capable of responding effectively to this need have tended to be viewed by states as attempts to limit and relativize the prerogatives of national sovereignty—which to some extent they inevitably are—and it is this that has prompted states' protracted resistance to the idea of an international criminal court.

However halting our progress toward a world less centered on nation-states may be, what is entirely clear is that a world in which states count for less is a world in which individual people will count for more. The role and responsibility of individuals, as the protagonists who shape history, is destined to grow; it thus becomes all the more critical that we each learn to live as creative and active global citizens, recognizing and working to fulfill our respective responsibilities toward the coming millennium. The redoubled wisdom and energy of ordinary citizens is absolutely essential to the work of forging a better future; in this sense NGOs have an invaluable role to play in providing a voice and a focus for people.

In recent years, we have seen movements in which NGOs have brought the energized efforts of citizens to bear not only on areas of traditional concern, such as human rights and humanitarian issues. The scope of their activities has expanded to include issues of what might be termed in the broadest sense "human security." This has meant effective NGO activism and advocacy on issues related to arms and security—areas traditionally the exclusive province of the state.

One such achievement is the World Court Project that in June 1997 succeeded in having the legality of nuclear arms reviewed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Similarly, the campaign waged by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and other NGOs was highly influential throughout the process of drafting and adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mines Convention in September 1997. These initiatives give great hope and confidence to people who love peace around the world.

Building on the momentum of these successes, I would like to propose that the next step taken, once more through popular initiative, should be to reduce the ever-increasing number of small arms—such as automatic rifles and small-caliber guns—that so often fan the flames of

the regional conflicts that are a tragic feature of the post-Cold War world. Effective measures must be taken to prevent their further proliferation, and in this regard I believe that we can learn much from the lessons of the Ottawa Process by which language in the Anti-Personnel Mines Convention was saved from the loopholes and ambiguities that are the almost inevitable result of a plenary drafting process operating by consensus.

Parallel with efforts to restrict and eventually eliminate weapons of mass destruction, the introduction of controls on the conventional weapons used to kill, maim, and terrorize people in armed conflicts worldwide is an essential step toward creating the institutional framework for peace.

Resolution of these difficult problems should not be left up to governments alone. All people should actively strive to confront the issues that threaten the survival of humankind and the sanctity of human life, as I have urged repeatedly over the years. The recent developments to which I have referred offer hope that the world is indeed moving in that direction.

The Soka Gakkai in Japan has been an active supporter of Abolition 2000, a worldwide movement initiated by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and other NGOs demanding that governments commit themselves to abolishing nuclear weapons. Inspired by a strong sense of responsibility for the future, the youth membership of the Soka Gakkai took the lead in a national campaign to collect signatures in support of the goals of Abolition 2000.⁴⁹

The ICJ advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons includes the unanimous view that: "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." Despite this opinion from the ICJ, the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in September 1996 has been followed by virtually no substantive progress toward the goal of nuclear disarmament. We must rally international public opinion, urging the nuclear weapons states to commence immediate negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons ban treaty.

It is encouraging that the World Court Project, which led to the ICJ advisory opinion, has been succeeded by the Abolition 2000 campaign, embracing as it does, the larger goal of abolishing all nuclear arms. The campaign calls on all the nuclear weapons states to conclude by the year 2000 a treaty establishing a timetable for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

I have long been convinced that we should not allow this century to end without resolving—or at least bringing resolution into sight on—the issue of nuclear weapons, which were developed in this century and which represent the greatest threat to human survival ever known. I earnestly call on all the nuclear weapons states to express to the world their commitment to ending the era of nuclear arms before the century's end.

A NEW CIVIL SOCIETY

In order not only to end the nuclear threat but to build a society where people can lead genuinely human lives, it is imperative that we construct a new civil society rooted in popular initiative. We must use the remaining three years of the twentieth century to take concrete steps toward laying the foundation of a new global civilization that will be, in those famous words, "of the people, by the people and for the people." There are a number of events already scheduled that offer opportunities to advance this endeavor.

Firstly, through deliberations such as those to be held this year in preparation for the first-ever World NGO Conference (scheduled for 1999), concrete proposals will be advanced to create a forum that will link NGOs with the General Assembly of the UN. The "Global Forum" I described in my peace proposal last year provides one possible model.

Then, in 1999, the Third Hague Peace Conference will be held under the auspices of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, of which the SGI is a member. There, an action plan for a world without war is expected to be adopted by representatives of NGOs and other organizations. The conference will convene to celebrate the Centennial of the 1899

Hague Peace Conference, and it has much in common with the idea of a conference for a world without war which I have advocated for some years. I would like to propose that the Third Hague Peace Conference seek to adopt a World Without War Declaration that is rooted in the sovereignty of humankind, and that this will open the way for a World Without War Covenant.

Then, in the year 2000, a People's Millennium Assembly, attended by representatives of NGOs and other groups representing the world's citizens, will be held in parallel with the Millennium Assembly scheduled to take place at the United Nations. This People's Assembly was referred to in UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's document on "Renewing the United Nations." I propose that, when the People's Millennium Assembly convenes, the free movement of people be secured—for instance by allowing attendance without a visa—after the model of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice which will enable people to move freely with the European Union.

It is my belief that progressive, bold initiatives of this kind made during the remaining three years of the twentieth century will pave the way for a breakthrough toward the construction of a new global civil society.

The state of the environment, another global issue, was actively debated last year. At the Rio + 5 Forum held in Brazil in March 1997 under the leadership of NGOs, the theme was "From Agenda to Action," and vigorous discussion took place under the slogan, "Let's stop saying 'someone should.'"

I quite agree with this sentiment. We must never lose sight of the fact that a third millennium imbued with respect for the sanctity of life, free from nuclear arms and war, and rich with the rainbow hues of diversity, will only come into being through the efforts of empowered and responsible citizens who don't wait for someone else to take the initiative.

As the ominous clouds of World War II were drawing low, Czech novelist Karel Capek (1890-1938), severely condemned the phrases "someone should" and "things are not so simple" as illustrative of the spiritual poverty that passively accepts the status quo.

He appealed to people:

When someone is drowning, it is not enough to stand aside and express the reasonable opinion that "Someone should jump in and save him." History needs those who act rather than those who only say what someone else should do.

We could say that almost all the useful or important things that have happened in the last thousand years were not exactly simple. If people were to convince themselves that nothing can be done only because "things are not simple," the world would not have much of what is called human endeavor.⁵⁰

We should heed this admonition as bearing directly on our own responsibility. What is needed most now is the courage to confront the realities that face us, and concrete actions to transform them.

We have a shared responsibility to advance step-by-step amidst these crushing realities. It is only through such an effort that we can prevent any repetition of the nightmarish tragedies that have marred this century and pass on the fruits of human endeavor to future generations.

Let us arise and act now, firm in the conviction that we are the world citizens who can shape and author future history. Let us embrace the kind of profound optimism that no fear or difficulty can conquer. The members of the SGI are committed to a movement, inspired by the principles of Buddhism, that promotes the values of peace, culture and education. Through these efforts we will continue the work of forging a broad-based network of solidarity among people of goodwill throughout the world.

Finally, let us have the confidence that someday historians will remark, from the kind of distant future that Toynbee envisaged, that the final years of the twentieth century were

indeed the turning point in human history; for it was then that the seeds were sown that have since blossomed into the vibrant global civilization of peace they now enjoy.

January 26, 1998

- ¹Daisaku Ikeeda, "Peace and Human Security: A Buddhist Perspective for the Twenty-first Century" (paper presented at the East-West Center, Honolulu, HI, January 25, 1995).
- ²Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity - Chapters in the History of Ideas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), p. 175.
- ³Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962).
- ⁴Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (reprint, Kila, MT: Kessinger Publishing Co., 1996).
- ⁵Leo Tolstoy, *Death of Ivan Ilyich* (New York: George Munro, 1888), p. 39.
- ⁶Philip B. Yampolsky, ed., *Selected Writings of Nichiren* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) p. 136.
- ⁷Daisaku Ikeeda et al., "Hokekyo no Chie" (Conversations on the Lotus Sutra), *Daijyakureng*, June 1997.
- ⁸A concept transmitted by T'ien-t'ai to his disciples. Quoted by Nichiren in "Onji Kuden" (The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings), *Goshu Zenshu* (The Collected Writings of Nichiren) (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 1952), p. 757.
- ⁹Henri Louis Bergson, *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion* (Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1932), p. 30.
- ¹⁰Konrad Zacharias Lorenz (1903-1989): Laureate of 1973 Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine with Niko Tinbergen and Karl von Frisch.
- ¹¹Shigeru Matsumoto ed., *Rekishi no Kyokun*, a translation of Arnold J. Toynbee's *Can We Learn Lessons from History?* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1957), p. 213.
- ¹²Arnold J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 213.
- ¹³*Ibid.*, p. 214.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 214.
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 215.
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 215-16.
- ¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 216.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 221.
- ¹⁹Yehudi Menuhin, *Theme and Variations* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), p. 183.
- ²⁰*Ibid.*, pp 184-85.
- ²¹Speech delivered on January 23, 1997 at Fundación Valencia Tercer Milenio—as quoted in Eiji Hattori, "3000 Nenki o Miru 'Sekajin' ga Utaeru Mono" (Cosmopolitan Appeals for the Third Millennium), *Ranza* (May 1997).
- ²²A Buddhist deity in Indian mythology who symbolizes the natural forces that protect and nurture life.
- ²³Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest* (Fall 1989).
- ²⁴Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 1 (Summer 1993).
- ²⁵Vadav Havel, "Insights into the World, Uniting Responsibility for the World," *Daily Yomiuri*, January 27, 1997, p. 6.
- ²⁶*Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi) (Tokyo: Daisan Bummeisha, 1996), vol. 2, p. 399.
- ²⁷Arnold Toynbee, "Hiseiyo Bummei no Shorai" (The Future of Non-Western Civilizations), *Asahi Shinbun*, January 6, 1957.
- ²⁸*Ibid.*
- ²⁹Hugh de Santis, *Beyond Progress: An Interpretive Odyssey to the Future* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 202.
- ³⁰G-7 Summit Economic Communiqué: Making a Success of Globalization for the Benefit of All (Lyon: June 28, 1996).
- ³¹G-7 Statement on Economic, Financial Issues (Denver: June 1997).
- ³²"Hiseiyo Bunmei no Shorai," p. 237.
- ³³*Nijusselki no Seishin no Kyokun* (The Spiritual Lessons of the 20th Century) (Tokyo: Ushio Shuppansha, 1996).
- ³⁴See Rajiv Gandhi, "Secular India Alone Can Survive," *Selected Speeches and Writings*, vol. 5 (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1987-91), p. 32.
- ³⁵"Human Education for World Citizenship" (address to the Education Division of the Soka Gakkai) (Osaka: October 22, 1991).
- ³⁶Yampolsky, ed., *Letters of Nichiren*, p. 37.
- ³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 516.
- ³⁸The Earth Charter, whose benchmark draft was approved at the Rio + 5 Forum, has been crafted with assistance from international leaders, including cochairs Mikhail Gorbachev, former Soviet President, and Maurice Strong, head of the nonprofit Earth Council.

- ³⁹ Austregésilo de Athayde and Daisaku Ikeda, *Nijūisseiki no Jinken o Katari* (Human Rights in the Twenty-first Century) (Tokyo: Ushio Shuppansha, 1995).
- ⁴⁰ Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, Article 60 (5).
- ⁴¹ Anne-Marie Slaughter, "The Real New World Order," *Foreign Affairs* (September-October 1997).
- ⁴² See the text at <<http://www.asiawide.or.jp/iac/declaral/>>
- ⁴³ David W. Chappell, "The Public Role of the Bodhisattva," *Journal of Oriental Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 177-93.
- ⁴⁴ *Goshō Zenshu*, p. 433.
- ⁴⁵ cf. *The Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā: A Buddhist Scripture on the Tathagata-garbha Theory*, trans. Alex Wayman and Hideko Wayman, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974) p. 65.
- ⁴⁶ Upendra Baxi, "Human Rights Education: The Promise of the Third Millennium?" <http://www.pdihre.org/globalization/third_millennium.htm>
- ⁴⁷ *Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1192.
- ⁴⁸ As the author discussed in his 1995 Peace Proposal.
- ⁴⁹ A total of 13,016,586 signatures was collected between November 1997 and January 26, 1998.
- ⁵⁰ Karel Capek, *Nábrehu dnu* (Prague: Československý Spisovatel, 1966).