

## A Vision of Peace in the *Lotus Sutra*

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### I. The threefold world is a burning house

**I**N the Simile and Parable chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, the phenomenal world is alluded to as a burning house, and it is in this world that the Buddha appears.

“His great pity and great compassion are constant and unflagging; at all times he seeks what is good and will bring benefit to all.

“He is born into the threefold world, a burning house, rotten and old, in order to save living beings from the fires of birth, old age, sickness and death, care, suffering, stupidity, misunderstanding, and the three poisons; to teach and convert them and enable them to attain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.”<sup>1</sup>

The threefold world (the worlds of desire, form, and formlessness) refers to the phenomenal world in which we currently live. And this world, which serves as our “house” is being consumed by the raging “fires” of suffering and the three poisons. The Buddha appears in this burning house to quench these fires and save the people from suffering.

Even now, after entering the twenty-first century, humanity is still enveloped by the fires of the three poisons of hatred, greed, and egoism, perpetuating the cycle of animosity and violence.

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 at the dawn of the new century offered a frightening contemporary vision of the passage in the *Lotus Sutra* that reads, “a fire suddenly broke out on all sides, spreading through the rooms of the house.”<sup>2</sup> This was a historical occurrence that triggered a war on terrorism, expanding the blaze of the three poisons to the entire world.

Especially since the terrorist attacks, Soka Gakkai International President, Daisaku Ikeda, has discerned the true nature of the burning house, and has promoted the application of Buddhist wisdom to alleviate global problems.

Ikeda, together with other conscientious intellectuals, do not view the terrorist attacks on September 11th as a “clash of civilizations.” He first addresses terrorism in the following way,

“Terrorism destroys the right of human beings to live in peace. Regardless of the motives or causes of terrorist acts, they can never be excused or justified. From the perspective of Buddhism and its belief in the sanctity of life, terrorism is an absolute evil. Yet it would be mistaken to simplistically conclude that the recent attacks were the result of a conflict between religions or civilizations, a view that will surely provoke further tragic consequences.”<sup>23</sup>

The terrorist attacks on September 11th took place amidst a backdrop of an ever widening disparity between political, military, and economic power and the resulting structural oppression.

Johan Galtung categorizes the outbreak of war, conflict and terrorist acts as examples of “direct violence,” and calls the deeper sources of those forms of violence such as poverty, hunger, environmental destruction, disregard for human rights and other forms of oppression and disparity—“structural violence.” Furthermore, he regards the creation of stereotypes of other religions by religious extremists “cultural violence.” Unless an all-encompassing strategy that addresses violence on all levels including structural and cultural forms is developed, the cycle of terrorism and conflict will continue to repeat itself.

The four sufferings of birth, aging, illness and death which are depicted in the Similes and Parables chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, symbolize the sufferings in contemporary society which stem from various forms of violence. Buddhism cites the source of these sufferings as “the fire of the three poisons” contained within human life itself.

Based on this Buddhist philosophy, Ikeda observes,

“In the darkness in which our civilization has been immersed since September 11, we sense an eerie absence, a spiritual landscape in which people are failing to recognize the humanity of the other.”<sup>24</sup>

And then further concludes,

“Rather I think, we need to ask ourselves deeper questions: What is the true danger? What are the real enemies? The real enemies are, I believe, poverty, hatred and, most formidable of all, the dehumanization that exerts a demonic dominion over contemporary society.”<sup>25</sup>

Poverty results from greed, a limitless energy to achieve one’s own satisfaction in blind disregard of the destruction and injury caused to others. In other words, the uncontrolled expansion of greed is the root cause of poverty. In turn, abysmal animosity is the result of an outpouring of uncontrollable hatred. In Buddhism, hatred churns inside one’s life in various forms such as rage, resentment, enmity, jealousy, and then finally erupts into the harming of others. Greed and hate are the pillars of structural violence. But even more fundamental than these, points out

Ikeda, is the illness of dehumanization. In Buddhism, dehumanization is regarded as fundamental darkness (also ignorance) and is an extreme form of egoism.

Fundamental darkness, when coupled with egoism of “the absence of the other,” undermines people’s humanity and turns them into objects regarded as the “enemy.” As a result of the process of dehumanizing the enemy, we, ourselves also become objects, thereby oppressing and rejecting our conscience, and giving free-reign to the three poisons to manifest themselves completely.

The “self” and “other” that arise as objects are no longer connected by the thread of humanism as espoused in the theory of dependent origination. The ties are completely severed by the three poisons.

In this way, Buddhism proposes that it is fundamental darkness, i.e. dehumanization, which serves as the mechanism behind the explosion of violence and greed that we are experiencing in modern society.

*From the Ashes: A Spiritual Response to the Attack on America* is a collection of writings authored by Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindi, and Buddhist leaders that was published immediately after the events of September 11th. As a contributor in this book, Ikeda calls for a strengthening of the forces of good within humanity. He states,

“International cooperation against terrorism cannot be limited to the short-term. At a deeper level, it requires a profound reexamination of the nature of human civilization,”<sup>6</sup> and then continues,

“It is the function of evil to divide; to alienate people from each other and divide one country from another. The universe, this world and our own lives, are the stage for a ceaseless struggle between hatred and compassion, the destructive and constructive aspects of life. We must never let up, confronting evil at every turn...

“In the end, the evil over which we must triumph is the impulse toward hatred and destruction that resides in us all.

“Unless we can achieve a fundamental transformation within our own lives, so that we are able to perceive our intimate connection with all our fellow human beings and feel their sufferings as our own, we will never be free of conflict and war. In this sense, I feel that a ‘hard power’ approach, one that relies on military might, will not lead to a long-term, fundamental resolution.”<sup>7</sup> He then concludes by stressing the need for genuine dialogue between cultures on all levels to restore faith in humanity.

To change the vector of history, hard power such as military might has often been implemented, bringing further bloodshed and engraving deeper feelings of animosity toward others. The world needs a more

encompassing, multi-layered approach to end this cycle of hatred.

One concrete suggestion for this is the creation of an international code of laws that will prevent the expansion of conflicts and terrorism, so that a solution based on a common standard can be reviewed in an international criminal court.

However, in order to take truly effective steps to change the structural violence that underlies direct violence, a strategy to promote human security carried out by a multitude of NGOs coordinated by the United Nations is necessary. Human security, as will be discussed further in Part III of this paper, includes not only satisfying basic needs, but also requires increasing the skills and capacity of the population at large as they are the most important factor in creating a stable society.

For this reason, human development is part and parcel of human security and a philosophical and religious foundation is needed to develop the “goodness” inside the lives of people, and by doing so, dehumanization can be overcome. What makes it possible to develop one’s goodness? One is education and the other is dialogue between civilizations and religions. Peace education, environmental education, human rights education, to name a few, will guide children to realize the goodness within their lives. This kind of education will help expand stability over the vertical axis of time, and inter-civilization and inter-religious dialogue will expand along the horizontal axis of space.

Dialogue is a breeding ground for trust, and is a vehicle for promoting understanding by destroying stereotypes that warp one’s view of other civilizations and religions, and replaces mistaken ideas with commonalities that we share as humans. Seeking eternal universal values such as love, compassion, non-violence and morality opens the way for clearing up mistaken views that cause separation and division and the dark heart of hatred.

Dialogue between the heads of nations, between leaders in respective professional and academic fields, and between ordinary citizens is what is needed as a basis for any attempt to create a structure for peace. Through dialogue, we can develop the goodness within ourselves, and when this becomes a global trend, all measures taken to solve global problems will bear long-lasting fruit.

## **II. Three major principles of peace in the *Lotus Sutra***

The three major principles of peace in the *Lotus Sutra* are 1) attainment of enlightenment for all people, 2) the Eternal Buddha, and 3) practicing the bodhisattva way. These three principles form a basis for many other

ideas for peace.

The first principle, the attainment of enlightenment for all people, is introduced in the Expedient Means chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. The single most important reason for the Buddha's appearance in this world lies in creating the cause for people to reach enlightenment,

"The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, wish to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings, to allow them to attain purity. That is why they appear in the world. They wish to show the Buddha wisdom to living beings, and therefore they appear in the world. They wish to cause living beings to awaken to the Buddha wisdom, and therefore they appear in the world. They wish to induce living beings to enter the path of Buddha wisdom, and therefore they appear in the world."<sup>8</sup>

According to Buddhist scholar T'ien-t'ai, "Buddha wisdom," as mentioned here, means the same thing as "Buddha nature."<sup>9</sup> All people inherently possess a Buddha nature, and it is this nature that the Buddha seeks to help bring forth by leading people to the path of Buddhist practice. From the passage above, Buddhism's view of the respect for human life can be established. The fact that all living beings possess a Buddha nature, a life as large as the universe, in the depths of their lives serves as a basis for fundamental human dignity.

In monotheistic religions, human dignity is rooted in the belief that humans were created in God's image, whereas in Buddhism, human rights derive from the fact that all people possess a Buddha nature in the depths of their lives.

Secondly, the *Lotus Sutra* teaches that all people possess the capacity for enlightenment by expounding the attainment of Buddhahood by persons of the two vehicles, evil persons, and women. This indicates that despite a person's race, sex, ethnicity, cultural background, class, occupation, or physical or psychological condition, they inherently possess the Buddha nature, thereby establishing a basis for equality in Buddhism.

Thirdly, the concept of opening, showing, awakening, and inducing living beings to enter the path of Buddha wisdom is an expression of complete realization of life's potential. This indicates being able to fully express the goodness, ability, feeling, and life energy that one possesses latently.

If the conditions that Shakyamuni Buddha attempted to establish during his lifetime with his wisdom and compassion were to be implemented on a large scale, the stage would be set for all people to achieve their full potential as human beings. This is the basis for self-actualization in Buddhism.

Fourth, in The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, the parable of the three kinds of medicinal herbs and two kinds of trees serves to illustrate a model of symbiosis for all living things, not only human life,

“The rain falling from one blanket of cloud accords with each particular species and nature, causing it to sprout and mature, to blossom and bear fruit. Though all these plants and trees grow in the same earth and are moistened by the same rain, each has its differences and particulars.

“Kashyapa, you should understand that the Thus Come One is like this. He appears in the world like a great cloud rising up. With a loud voice he penetrates to all the heavenly and human beings and the asuras of the entire world, like a great cloud spreading over the thousand-millionfold lands.”<sup>10</sup>

The simile of a great cloud rising is employed to explain the appearance of the Buddha and the far-reaching extent of his preaching which extends across the entire phenomenal world. Just as the rain of the great cloud falls, the preaching of the Buddha rains upon all people equally. However, just as each tree and grass is unique in its ability to absorb and use the rain, people differ in their religious capacity, which is a significant feature of this simile.

In a speech given at Harvard University, Ikeda expands on this simile to create an image of peace for all living things existing in harmony,

“This scene, depicted with the vividness, grandeur, and beauty characteristic of the *Lotus Sutra*, symbolizes the enlightenment of all people touched by the Buddha’s Law. At the same time, it is a magnificent tribute to the rich diversity of human and all other forms of sentient and non-sentient life. Thus, each living thing manifests the enlightenment of which it is capable; each contributes to the harmony of the grand concert of symbiosis. In Buddhist terminology, ‘dependent origination’ (*engi*) describes these relationships. Nothing and nobody exists in isolation. Each individual being functions to create the environment that sustains all other existences. All things are mutually supporting and interrelated, forming a living cosmos, what modern philosophy might term a semantic whole. That is the conceptual framework through which Mahayana Buddhism views the natural universe.”<sup>11</sup>

The parable of the three kinds of medicinal herbs and two kinds of trees highlights the individuality of plants—an image of all living things realizing their full potential amidst a backdrop of the great universe which supports all life equally. Nichiren describes this full blooming of individual potential as the principle of cherry, plum, peach, and damson blossoms.<sup>12</sup>

All people and all of nature are contained within the life of the Buddha. The parable is a model of harmonious existence where nature and humanity co-exist peacefully, detailing a prosperous society that has overcome environmental destruction, as well as all direct and structural violence. Buddhism aims to create such a society.

The second major principle of peace, the Eternal Buddha, appears in the Life Span of the Thus Come One chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, as the Buddha of beginningless time. Using the life of Shakyamuni, the principle of the Eternal Buddha is expounded here,

“In all the worlds the heavenly and human beings and asuras all believe that the present Shakyamuni Buddha, after leaving the palace of the Shakyas, seated himself in the place of practice not far from the city of Gaya and there attained anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. But good men, it has been immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of nayutas of kalpas since I in fact attained Buddhahood.”<sup>13</sup>

After this, Shakyamuni uses the parable of numberless major world system dust particle *kalpas* to explain how long ago it was that he actually attained enlightenment. He also speaks about the future, which he says is twice as long as the time he attained enlightenment in the distant past to the present. In effect, this can be understood to mean that his life is eternal.

The Eternal Buddha is at one with the Eternal Law, and it is this Eternal Buddha who is also the Eternal Savior Buddha. This is explained in the following quote,

“Ever since then I have been constantly in this saha world, preaching the Law, teaching and converting. And elsewhere I have led and benefited living beings in hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of nayutas and asamkhyas of lands.”<sup>14</sup>

After attaining enlightenment, Shakyamuni attempted various ways of alleviating people’s suffering through guidance and providing for their needs, and regarding these acts of extraordinary compassion he says,

“This, the Buddha’s work, I have never for a moment neglected.”<sup>15</sup>

Second president of the Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, explains the actions of the Eternal Savior Buddha from a cosmic perspective, stating these actions are a great practice of compassion by the “Universal Buddha.” He justifies the name Universal Buddha by explaining that the Eternal Savior Buddha is one with the Eternal Law, which integrates space of the Buddhas in the ten directions (Emergence of the Treasure Tower chapter) and integrates time of the Buddhas of the three existences (Life Span of the Thus Come One chapter).

In Toda's *Theory of Compassion*, he states,

"In the first place, the universe in its entirety is the substance of the Buddha, and all phenomena in the universe are the workings of compassion. Therefore, compassion is the inherent nature of the universe."<sup>16</sup> He also explains that humans, who have been given life by the universe, have a special mission to fulfill.

"Since the universe itself is compassion, that of course means that our daily activities naturally constitute the workings of compassion themselves. Because we lead privileged lives as human beings, we must not descend to the same level as animals or plants. Carrying out more exalted activities is the attitude of those truly dedicated to serving the Buddha."<sup>17</sup> And also advises us, "to live with an awareness of true compassion."<sup>18</sup>

Here Toda explains the reason for humanity's existence from Buddhism's cosmic perspective. That is, he proposes that in order to repay our debt of gratitude to the universe for giving us life, humanity has a unique mission to expand upon the universe's working of compassion by contributing to its creative evolution.

In the Expedient Means chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, human dignity which lies at the heart of human rights, is linked to the Buddha nature inherent in our lives, and the potential for this nature to be realized fully. Furthermore, in the Life Span of the Thus Come One chapter, the full realization of one's Buddha nature becomes possible when it interacts with the great compassion of the Universal Buddha as the Eternal Savior Buddha. In other words, inside the context of the grand cosmos, human dignity becomes manifest when we become one with the Universal Buddha, and fulfill our universal mission to create compassion.

Dignity is not something that comes automatically, just because we are born human. Human dignity is a component of human life because of our potential to manifest compassion and to take part in the compassionate action of the Eternal Universal Buddha.

Is it then possible to respect the dignity of "people" who antagonize the compassionate workings of the universe and destroy the life of oneself, others, and the natural environment under the influence of the three poisons and malevolence? In the Devadatta chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, the acts of salvation carried out by the Eternal Buddha include the enlightenment of evil persons. There is no eternal hell in Buddhism. It is the Buddha's role to try to save even those who seek to destroy the compassion of the cosmos by drawing forth their Buddha nature, and it is this act that establishes grounds for human dignity. The ceaseless actions for salvation of the Universal Buddha are what form the basis for

Buddhism's view of human rights and peace.

In Mahayana Buddhism, "bodhisattva" is the name given to the group of people who live with an awareness of this mission in the universe.

This brings us to the third major principle, which is practicing the bodhisattva way. There are two separate groups of bodhisattvas that appear in the *Lotus Sutra*, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth and the bodhisattvas of theoretical teaching, and I would like to explore the difference between these two groups.

In the dialog, *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, Ikeda defines one group (the Bodhisattvas of the Earth) as the bodhisattvas of the essential teaching, and groups the bodhisattvas that appear after the Medicine King chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, bodhisattvas of the theoretical teaching (i.e., Bodhisattvas Medicine King, Wonderful Sound, Perceiver of the World's Sounds, and Universal Worthy) and talks of their relationship in the following way,

"As you know, when light passes through a standard triangular prism, it breaks into the seven main colors of a spectrum. Light is the totality, and the seven colors are its constituent parts. Similarly, the bodhisattvas of theoretical teaching who appear in the latter assembly at Eagle Peak, while each carrying in their heart the light of Buddhahood, richly exhibit the hues of their individual mission."<sup>19</sup>

In other words, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth (bodhisattvas of the essential teaching) represent the light as a whole, and the bodhisattvas of the theoretical teaching each fulfill their missions in their own way, like the seven colors of the rainbow.

First of all, in the Emerging from the Earth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth make their appearance as champions of the *Lotus Sutra* in the era after the Buddha's passing,

"The bodies of these bodhisattvas were all golden in hue, with the thirty-two features and an immeasurable brightness,"<sup>20</sup> described as having the same features as a Buddha.

There are four leaders of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth who are introduced in the Emerging from the Earth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*,

"Among these bodhisattvas were four leaders. The first was called Superior Practices, the second was called Boundless Practices, the third was called Pure Practices, and the fourth was called Firmly Established Practices. These four bodhisattvas were the foremost leaders and guiding teachers among all the group."<sup>21</sup>

The Teacher of the Law chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* states, "he or she is the envoy of the Thus Come One. He has been dispatched by the Thus

Come One and carries out the Thus Come One's work."<sup>22</sup> This passage explains the mission of those who have pledged to uphold and spread the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*, and indicates the existential character of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, i.e., the Bodhisattvas of the Earth are agents of the Buddha, having been sent by the Buddha to do the Buddha's work, which is the salvation of humanity.

In *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, Nichiren Daishonin uses a quote from the ninth volume of the *Supplement to "The Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra"* to correlate these four leaders to the four virtues of true self, eternity, purity, and happiness, respectively. The four virtues are four noble qualities of a Buddha's life,

"The four leaders described in the sutra passage here represent the four virtues. Superior Practices represents the virtue of true self. Boundless Practices represents the virtue of eternity. Pure Practices represents the virtue of purity. And Firmly Established Practices represents the virtue of happiness.

"There are times when a single person possesses all four of these principles."<sup>23</sup>

Looking at them one by one, Nichiren links Superior Practices to the virtue of true self, indicating a self that is one with the Eternal Savior Buddha. A person who has awakened to his mission in the universe takes compassionate action on his own accord. Since Superior Practices is also at one with the eternal Universal Buddha, he is completely free to move, unfettered by any obstacle that attempts to stop his activities of compassion.

The virtue of purity linked to Pure Practices represents a life-cleansing function, which consists of a process of actively transforming negative tendencies of the self to positive ones. As the self becomes filled with good, it becomes increasingly free. This is a manifestation of the virtue of eternity as linked with Boundless Practices, and is also an aspect of freedom for Superior Practices.

The true self of Superior Practices, which transforms evil to good and carries out compassionate action establishes a firm foundation of life. This solid foundation is a true expression of the virtue of happiness, and is a representation of the life-state of Firmly Established Practices.

Through the process described above, the greater self (of Superior Practices) becomes one with the Eternal Savior Buddha and is liberated to take compassionate action which is an expression of an expanded state of life. The four virtues as expressed in the Bodhisattvas of the Earth are an ideal of living focused on self-realization, and manifesting the four virtues in one's life is Buddhism's goal for humanity as a

whole, as doing so leads to human development and security.

The actions of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth are practical examples of compassion within the burning house of the threefold world. The chapters following the Former Affairs of the Bodhisattva Medicine King chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* give numerous examples of compassionate action from a variety of perspectives, and serve as an ideal for bodhisattva practice.

Next, I would like to examine the bodhisattvas of theoretical teaching, which are represented by Bodhisattvas Medicine King, Wonderful Sound, Universal Worthy, and Perceiver of the World's Sounds. Traditionally, these bodhisattvas are regarded in relation to the respective fields they represent (medical, artistic, academic, and informational) but here I would like to view them from the perspective of human rights philosophy and as specific aspects of compassionate action of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

In this light, we can view Bodhisattva Medicine King as a function to free people from illness by providing food, water, medical assistance, and healthcare, and represents the human right to health and longevity. Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound represents the right of artistic expression, and Bodhisattva Universal Worthy represents the right of academic and ideological freedom.

Lastly, the bodhisattva that listens to the humble wishes of the common people, grants their wishes, and raises people to a state of life where they are not afraid of anything is Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds. The way that this bodhisattva saves people is by providing tangible rewards in this lifetime. In the burning house of the threefold world which is our current society, listening and addressing people's needs is the only way to establish a secure existence and raise the level of life for all. The compassion of Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds frees people of various fears, such as violence, natural disasters, and poisons. From the perspective of human rights, the following serve as specific examples of the power of protection that Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds possesses.<sup>24</sup>

- a. Even if you enter a great fire, the fire can not burn you and if washed away by a great flood, you will immediately find yourself in shallow place—this symbolizes freedom from fear of natural disasters.
- b. Even if you face trouble with rakshasa demons on the high seas, or face imminent danger from attack from countless yakshas and demons, they will not be able to cause you any harm—symboliz-

- ing freedom from violence.
- c. Even if you face numerous evil-hearted bandits, you can successfully flee from them unharmed—symbolizing freedom from violence.
  - d. Even if you encounter trouble with the king’s law and face the death sentence, the executioner’s sword will be broken to bits—symbolizing freedom from political oppression and freedom to enjoy basic human rights.
  - e. Even if you are imprisoned and bound by fetters and chains, the restraints will fall off and you will be freed—symbolizing freedom to enjoy basic human rights under any government.
  - f. Even if someone tries to poison you, the poison will rebound upon the originator—symbolizing specifically freedom from the fear of being poisoned.

In this way, Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World’s Sounds’ compassion works to free people from the fear of violence, natural disasters, poisons and other calamities and protect them.

The “freedoms” that the bodhisattvas of theoretical teaching symbolize are realized in practice in contemporary society as human security, human development, and human rights.

The bodhisattvas that appear in the *Lotus Sutra*, both Bodhisattvas of the Earth as well as those of theoretical teaching, merge together as one to form a holistic but also specific model of self-actualization for humanity to strive for.

### III. Striving Toward the Creation of a Proactive Peace

The kind of peace that Buddhism aims for is not a passive one, which is based simply on the absence of war, but one that actively seeks to eliminate all the causes of structural violence and establish a proactive peace. In tackling the causes of structural violence, which arise from the more direct form, “human security” has recently been gathering much attention as a possible framework to work within. Human security prioritizes the preservation, continuation and respect of human life.

The final report of the United Nations Commission on Human Security was completed on May, 2003. It called for a major paradigm shift in expanding its thinking about security from the state level to the individual level. The committee defines human security in the following way, “to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment”<sup>225</sup>—the vital core of life being basic human rights and freedom. Human security is founded on freedom from

want, freedom from fear, and freedom to take action on one's own behalf among others.

In his book, *The Strategy of Human Security*,<sup>26</sup> Yoshida Fumihiko further elaborates on freedom from want as freedom from poverty, hunger, disease, and access to clean water and air. He breaks down freedom from fear as freedom from the fear of violence, crime, and drugs, and freedom to act for oneself as freedom to enjoy family life and to participate in ethnic group gatherings. He also adds, for political security, the freedom to retain one's human rights.

The commission summarizes, "it means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations."<sup>27</sup>

How can we create a society that will protect the basic freedoms of the individual and one that will allow for the development of the individual's latent potential? The Commission on Human Security proposes this can be achieved by promoting "protection" and "empowerment."<sup>28</sup> Protection means to guard against violence, conflict, poverty, terrorism, financial disaster, suppression of human rights, and diseases such as AIDS, and the task of providing this protection is entrusted to national governments, international organizations, NGOs, and corporations. As for empowerment, this requires a flowering of one's dormant capabilities, whatever the circumstances, so that individuals can proactively contribute to the sustaining of human security. Through education, it is hoped that the awareness of the individual, the ability to absorb information, and the ability to acquire new technology will be heightened, eventually leading to a society that can realize human security for all members of its society.

As the topic of human security is expanded to the point of viewing the latent potential within the depths of people's lives, examination of the link between security and human development becomes necessary. This concept immediately began gathering attention in 1990 after being introduced by Mahbub ul Haq of Pakistan and promoted by Amartya Sen of India.

In 1994, according to the UNDP's Human Development Report, a key element to sustainable human development is discussed,

"Human beings are born with certain potential capabilities. The purpose of development is to create an environment in which all people can expand their capabilities, and opportunities can be enlarged for both present and future generations. The real foundation of human development is universalism in acknowledging the life claims of everyone."<sup>29</sup>

Human development assists in unveiling hidden human potential so that it can be fully realized. In order for this to occur, Sen proposes,

“Human development is concerned with removing the various hindrances that restrain and restrict human lives and prevent its blossoming.”<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, several different indices have been devised to measure human development such as the HDI (Human Development Index), the GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure), and the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals).

M.S. Swaminathan of India argues,

“A general standard for measurement should include aspects of education, healthcare, life-expectancy, literacy, elimination of sexual differences based on economic wealth, opportunities for employment, skills and education.”<sup>31</sup>

Regarding the complementary relationship between human development and human security, Sen adds,

“The idea of human development, broad as it is, does, however, have a powerfully buoyant quality, since it is concerned with progress and augmentation. It is out to conquer fresh territory on behalf of enhancing human lives and is far too upbeat to focus on rearguard actions needed to secure what has to be safeguarded. This is where the notion of human security becomes particularly relevant.”<sup>32</sup>

He specifies the complementary nature of the two concepts by commenting,

“Human security as an idea fruitfully supplements the expansionist perspective of human development by directly paying attention to what are sometimes called ‘downside risks’,” and,

“...the human focus of development approaches...tend to concentrate on ‘growth with equity’, a subject that has generated a vast literature and inspired many policy initiatives. In contrast, focusing on human security requires that serious attention be paid to ‘downturns with security’...”<sup>33</sup>

Preserving human security increases the number of opportunities and choices for human development. This is an increase in freedom. Through this mutually supplementary relationship, untapped human potential is given a chance to manifest and the circumstances for self-actualization of each individual becomes ripe.

Sen also comments on the relationship between human development and human rights,

“Commitments underlying human rights take the form of demanding that certain basic freedoms of human beings be respected, aided and enhanced. The basically normative nature of the concept of human rights leaves open the question of which particular freedoms are crucial enough to count as human rights that society should acknowledge, safeguard and promote. This is where human security makes a significant

contribution by identifying the importance of freedom from basic insecurities—new and old. The descriptive richness of the considerations that make security so important in human lives can, thus, join hands with the force of ethical claims that the recognition of certain freedoms as human rights provides. Human rights and human security can, therefore, fruitfully supplement each other.<sup>734</sup>

As explained above, human security provides a basis for determining which freedoms need protection depending on the situation involved. On the other hand, human rights play a large supporting role when specifying human security issues by lending an ethical base for discussions. In this way, human security, human rights, and human development work constructively together to protect human life, the right to live, and basic freedoms, thus allowing the realization of latent potential and the living of a more fruitful life.

So what kind of human abilities and potentials are unleashed by successful implementation of human security and human development? The Commission for Human Security sets forth the fundamental direction by stating, “human security starts from the recognition that people are the most active participants in determining their well-being. It builds on people’s efforts, strengthening what they do for themselves.”<sup>735</sup>

Each individual person is charged with determining which latent ability they want to develop, and the kind of life they want to lead, and in what way they want to self-actualize themselves. Creating a supportive environment for the development of abilities by removing all the obstacles preventing one from exploring one’s own possibilities makes it possible to examine one’s life-view.

As I have stated earlier, the *Lotus Sutra* recognizes the potential for all people to attain enlightenment. It also proposes that the purpose for life is to manifest our hidden abilities by utilizing our surroundings and having the freedom to make choices.

Human security and human development, when seen through the eyes of Buddhism, not only includes various technical skills, but also the deeper capabilities that human beings possess in the depths of their lives. Intelligence, experience, skill are all part of one’s capabilities, but in order to fully realize oneself, the most fundamental key to success is how to approach the development of the “self.” The question we must ask ourselves is,

“Is my life ruled by egoism and the three poisons? Or is my life full of goodness?”

The self that seeks to establish human security, human development, and human rights for all of humanity is, of course, a self that is full of

goodness. In Buddhist terms, goodness is defined by the presence of trust, humility, the power to control desire, the power to control anger, and the power to suppress violence. Through teachings such as dependent origination, Buddhism shares the wisdom to overcome the inherent darkness that we possess in our hearts.

When one is protected by the kind of goodness mentioned above, it is free to work on gaining a sense of individuality, developing latent talents and skills, and striving toward self-realization with vibrant energy.

Having a strong conviction in one's own self-worth is the ideal state of life that the Bodhisattvas of the Earth illustrate. When one develops the greater self within, the desire to fulfill one's mission in this universe will come forth naturally. The mission to save others from suffering and lead them to happiness is the direct road to self-actualization, and this self-actualization, in turn, contributes directly to others' happiness, fusing happiness of the self and the other into one. Is this not an ideal model of proactive global citizenship fit for humanity in the twenty-first century? The promotion of human security, human development, and human rights aims at creating a proactive peace, and the key to realizing this vision is the fostering of individuals to become global citizens.

#### **IV. The Requisites of a Global Citizen—Bodhisattva Never Disparaging**

Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, who is depicted in the *Lotus Sutra* as an earlier incarnation of Shakyamuni while he was training to become a Buddha, serves as a model of behavior for the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. In a letter entitled *The Three Kinds of Treasure*, Nichiren writes,

“The heart of the Buddha's lifetime of teachings is the *Lotus Sutra*, and the heart of the practice of the *Lotus Sutra* is found in the ‘Never Disparaging’ chapter. What does Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's profound respect for people signify? The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being.”<sup>36</sup>

The Expedient Means chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* explains the ultimate reason for Shakyamuni Buddha's appearance in this world, which is to show what it means to truly act as a human being, and this is exemplified by the practice of veneration that Bodhisattva Never Disparaging undertook.

If the bodhisattva-like model of the “self” presented in the *Lotus Sutra* through the images of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth and the bodhisattvas of theoretical teaching is regarded as a viable model for global

citizenship, then it would be fitting to study the actions of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging.

The Bodhisattva Never Disparaging chapter describes the practice of bowing and veneration of a lone bodhisattva named Never Disparaging who lived in a time when arrogant monks held great authority.

He respected everyone's innate Buddha nature, and addressed everyone he met in the following way,

"I have profound reverence for you, I would never dare treat you with disparagement or arrogance. Why? Because you are all practicing the bodhisattva way and are certain to attain Buddhahood."<sup>37</sup>

However, as Never Disparaging had not devoted time to Buddhist study, he had no formal qualifications. Therefore, some of those he addressed, angrily slandered him saying,

"This ignorant monk—where does he come from, presuming to declare that he does not disparage us and bestowing on us a prediction that we will attain Buddhahood? We have no use for such vain and irresponsible predictions!" Furthermore, others attacked him with staves and threw tiles and rocks. Never Disparaging, after running away to a safe distance, would again recite, "I would never dare disparage you, because you are all certain to attain Buddhahood!" On his deathbed, he heard from the sky the previous teachings of Buddha Awesome Sound King which purified his six senses, and upon this purification, was able to extend his life for a considerable number of years, and in those years he was able to assist in the enlightening of countless others, including those arrogant monks who had previously attacked him.

What can be gleaned from Never Disparaging's actions described in the sutras, especially from the context of global citizenship?

First of all, even if on the surface they were arrogant or harbored ill-will, Never Disparaging respected all people because of the innate Buddha nature that shines within their lives. He also explained that all people who persevere on the path of the bodhisattva way, will without fail manifest their Buddhahood and enjoy an enlightened state of life filled with goodness. In other words, even if they were persecuting him at present, he equally respected all people because of their potential to become Buddhas in the future. Here, there is absolute faith in human life, exemplifying a truly humanistic outlook that looks past the deluded actions of others, and observes with keen insight the shining Buddha nature that lies within and will one day manifest. It is respect for humanity in actual practice.

Secondly, Never Disparaging's actions to draw forth people's Buddha nature implemented a strategy of absolute non-violence. Mahatma

Gandhi, who led the resistance movement against British colonial rule using non-violence, believed respect for human life arose from the spiritual strength of non-violence,

“Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit.”<sup>38</sup>

Never Disparaging responds to persecution and animosity towards him with the spiritual strength of non-violence. Often employing the metaphor of a coin, Gandhi championed the use of non-violence (*ahimsa*) to manifest the ultimate truth of the universe (*satya*), saying that the two concepts were like the sides of a single coin—symbolizing that truth can only be realized through non-violence.

The *Lotus Sutra* refers to the ultimate truth of the universe as the Eternal Law, and teaches its realization can only be achieved when the Law and the Eternal Buddha become one through the observance of precepts. One example of a precept of the bodhisattva way is the precept of no killing, i.e. *ahimsa*. In truth, the only way to manifest the great life of the Eternal Buddha from within, is to commit completely to non-violence. It is impossible to manifest the condition of a Buddha through violence or malevolence.

No matter what the circumstance, Never Disparaging never failed to see the Buddha nature within each person, and based all of his actions on non-violence and good will. This reinforces the idea that in order to achieve peace, peaceful means must be utilized, and that the goal and means are one and the same.

Thirdly, at the time right before his death, Never Disparaging’s life was purified by hearing the preaching of the Buddha, and this purification led to the extension of his life. This indicates a complete manifestation of the state of Buddhahood as he neared the last moments of life, and by doing so, rejuvenated his life and lived many more years. With this extended life, he persevered to save even more people from suffering, including those who had persecuted him previously. After seeing his enlightened state and hearing his words, they took up faith under his direction. This caused a flowering of the Buddha nature inside the lives of those who previously harbored ill-will, transforming their life into one of faith and good will. This is a prime example of mutual happiness resulting from the process of seeking Buddhahood for oneself and others.

The path of bodhisattva traversed by Never Disparaging led to self-actualization, and this entailed the full manifestation of Buddhahood for

himself and others, showing that interaction with others advance one's own path to the maturity of the "greater self." There is no path of peace or tranquility for a lone person, disconnected from society. It is only when tranquility for all humankind is achieved that we can establish peace for each individual person. This fits in harmoniously with the goal of human security and human development, which is the empowerment of people, aligning self-actualization with the happiness of oneself and others through non-violent efforts.

Ikeda looks out on the landscape of the twenty-first century saying,

"In this century, the 21st century, we must make the principle that killing is not acceptable or justified in any circumstances the fundamental ethos of humankind. Unless we can widely spread and deeply implant among all peoples the principle that violence can never be condoned as a means of advocating one's beliefs, humanity will have learned nothing from the lessons of the 20th century. The real struggle of the 21st century will not be between civilizations, nor between religions. It will be the struggle between violence and nonviolence."<sup>39</sup>

It is the task of global citizens to wage this war for non-violence, and in the concluding section, I would like to unveil the qualities of a global citizen from the viewpoint of the *Lotus Sutra*.

The first quality of a global citizen is being equipped with a profound world-view which supports the dignity of humankind and respect for life. The world-view of a global citizen should be one based on eternal and universal themes. To give an example from the *Lotus Sutra*, the Life Span of the Thus Come One chapter contains an Eternal Buddha who is at one with the Eternal Law. The Universal Buddha, who is a manifestation of the cosmos itself, is an Eternal Savior Buddha.

The second quality, having the Eternal Savior Buddha as a base, is holding the belief that all people can attain enlightenment as indicated in the Expedient Means chapter. The basis for the respect for humankind comes from the fact that all people, regardless of their, race, sex, ethnicity, culture, occupation, or social standing, are equally endowed with a Buddha nature, and that they can manifest it if they apply themselves.

The third quality, as exemplified by the actions of Never Disparaging, is strictly adhering to a policy of non-violence. Never implementing violence as a means to achieve peace, global citizens must use wisdom and compassion to devise non-violent means to achieve their goals. Examples of this include the use of dialog, exchange, proactive participation, education, culture, and awareness-raising activities.

The fourth quality of a global citizen is devoting oneself for the sake of others to alleviate their suffering and assist in the establishment of a

lasting peace, with the awareness that this is the path to one's own self-actualization. In the *Lotus Sutra*, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, who are practicing the bodhisattva way, were charged with the universal mission to save humanity by the Eternal Buddha. By deeply realizing their individual missions in life, they live a life based on the vow to fulfill their missions.

The fifth quality of a global citizen is having a multi-cultural mindset for peaceful co-existence, as depicted in the parable of the three kinds of medicinal herbs and two kinds of trees. The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs chapter contains an ideal image for a society of everlasting peace where many serve to support one and one serves to support many. This creates an atmosphere where each individual is empowered to develop to their full potential—in line with the concept of cherry, plum, peach and damson—allowing for the dynamic harmony of abilities that support unified co-existence in a highly cultural society.

The sixth quality of a global citizen is having a pluralistic character of self in order to support the multi-cultural co-existence described above. Just as the bodhisattvas of theoretical teaching are armed with an arsenal of useful capabilities, the global citizen must be able to flexibly adapt to rapidly changing situations to be effective in serving others. For example, Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound could switch between thirty-four different body forms and Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds into thirty-three forms, in accord to the particular suffering the people were facing. The relationship of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth and the bodhisattvas of theoretical teaching illustrate the balance between a multi-faceted character and an integrated self, proposing the existence of an ideal self that harmonizes all of these characteristics into one.

The seventh quality of a global citizen is having a bodhisattva-like self that thinks globally and acts locally. Looking at the self from this perspective, a multi-layered aspect comes to light. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first president of the Soka Gakkai, in his book, *A Geography of Human Life*, talks about “multi-layered world-views”<sup>40</sup>—homeland, nation, and world. The local region in which one lives is the homeland (or local community), and by closely examining its features, a base for understanding larger concepts of ethnicity and nation can be formed, and a deep yearning to co-exist with nature results. Makiguchi was an ardent supporter of exploring homeland life, because doing so strengthened the idea that no matter how expansive one's view of the world becomes, being grounded and affecting change in the local area is most important.

The bodhisattva-like self is a self that dynamically integrates into one,

the various layers of the ethnic self, the national self, and the earthling self. This bodhisattva-like self is capable of improving one's local community, while also taking action on higher levels in other areas as a citizen of the nation and the world.

The comprehensive underlying theme that transcends all the of the various aspects and qualities of a global citizen that have been discussed up to this point, is the vow to fulfill one's universal mission charged by the Eternal Savior Buddha and the non-violent and compassionate means to fulfill that goal. With global citizens actively engaging in the aforementioned goal and means, the everlasting peace described in the *Lotus Sutra* becomes a reality.

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