

# The New Humanism for World Peace

Yoichi Kawada

## [I] Foundation for Peace—Buddha’s Enlightenment

**S**HAKYAMUNI Buddha’s words are recorded in the *Sutta Nipata*,

“Fear comes from the (one who has) embraced violence. Look at people quarrelling. I shall describe my agitation, how it was experienced by me.”<sup>1</sup>

“Seeing people floundering, like fish (floundering) in little water, seeing them opposed to one another, fear came upon me.”<sup>2</sup>

The India of Shakyamuni’s time was filled with endless strife as smaller countries were annexed by larger ones, and conflicts between people abound. It was a time of great upheaval.

In a world so full of conflict, how should peace and co-existence be brought about? The impetus of Shakyamuni’s denouncing of his royal heritage and searching for the truth within his deeper consciousness came from the shock and fear he felt at the sight of violence.

Meditation allows submersion from the superficial layers of consciousness to the deeper layers beneath. In other words, it is a search for the “cosmos within” using the shallow consciousness of the self as a starting point.

By submerging oneself into the deeper consciousnesses, one undergoes a process of self-reflection, first reflecting on one’s own past experiences. On deeper levels, the self is transcended in an area of the transpersonal. This means a level of consciousness that connects the self with members of one’s family and friends, and then even deeper, to the level connecting oneself with one’s tribe, ethnic group and nationality. This level is where the consciousness of a group of people of the same tribe or ethnicity, or in today’s terminology, nationality, merge together as one. At deeper levels, there is a consciousness connecting all humanity, and all this functions upon the foundation of the natural environment.

Shakyamuni’s meditation took him into the deepest sections of humanity’s consciousness, and first sought a peaceful world without the

sufferings of conflict, sickness, birth and death, but in his broad quest found that such a blissful world does not exist anywhere. He then sought to find the answer to what makes people antagonistic towards one another.

At that moment, he perceived that “the arrow of earthly desires” was embedded in the depths of humanity’s consciousness,

“Then I saw a barb here, hard to see, nestling in the heart.”<sup>3</sup>

“Affected by this barb, one runs in all directions. Having pulled that barb out, one does not run, nor sink.”<sup>4</sup>

In a 1993 speech at Harvard University, Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda proposed that this “(single) arrow of earthly desires” stuck deep in the consciousness of all human beings can be viewed as “an attachment to distinctions.” He states,

“The following quote is illustrative: ‘I perceived a single, invisible arrow piercing the hearts of the people.’ The ‘arrow’ symbolizes a prejudicial mindset, an unreasoning emphasis on individual differences. India at that time was going through transition and upheaval. To Shakyamuni’s penetrating gaze, it was clear that the underlying cause of the conflict was attachment to distinctions, to ethnic, national, and other differences.”<sup>5</sup>

An “attachment to distinctions” is a contemporary interpretation for the concept of “fundamental darkness” that lies at the base of all earthly desires. People have a tendency to desperately cling to their “lesser self” of a shallow consciousness, discriminating others as the poisons of greed, anger, stupidity and distrust rule their behavior. Buddhism explains the reason why people cling to this “lesser self” is because of their fundamental darkness. Fundamental darkness refers to ignorance of the existence of a fundamental law (Dharma) of the universe that underlies all things.

Ikeda suggests that the “arrow” is the most fundamental evil of humankind, and that only by overcoming this evil, can we establish a peaceful world of co-existence.

So how was Shakyamuni able to overcome his fundamental darkness, his “attachment to distinctions”? How was he able to pull out the “arrow of earthly desires”?

Shakyamuni’s meditation took him further, deeper, beyond the realm of humanity’s consciousness to the level of the life and death of planets, and then even further to the cosmos itself—and he became one with the life of the universe at the deepest extremity of consciousness. By doing so, he was able to realize the eternal fundamental law of all things (Dharma) within the depths of his own being, and was able to overcome

his fundamental darkness. He reached nirvana.

How does Shakyamuni describe this inner truth, this fundamental law of the universe, this ultimate discovery within his enlightenment? He hints at the content of his realization in the *Udana* in poems.

Poem At Dawn

When things become manifest  
To the ardent meditating brahman,  
He abides scattering Mara's host  
Like the sun illumining the sky.

The Dhamma mentioned here refers to the fundamental law of the universe, that is, the eternal law of the universe. The appearance of the Dhamma or Dharma coincides with the destruction of the fundamental darkness (the devil's army) that lies within us as earthly desires, and it is then that the realm of Nirvana opens.

Shakyamuni's enlightenment was the overcoming of all fundamental darkness and earthly desires by the fundamental life of the universe, or Dhamma, within the inner cosmos of a single individual. "Like the sun illumining the sky" describes the great expanse of life illuminated by the light of awakening. At this point, the inner cosmos and the outer cosmos are at one.

This Dhamma becomes the Thus Come One and forms the basis of Mahayana Buddhism, which teaches that the cause which allows all people to attain enlightenment is the Buddha Life or Storehouse of the Thus Come One contained within the depths of all life.

After the Buddha's passing, many sutras were compiled, including the Lotus Sutra, which appeared in the Early Mahayana years.

Proponents of Mahayana Buddhism claimed to have experienced an awakening, and during that state of meditation, were able to encounter the Buddha. The core of that experience of awakening is referred to as *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* (supreme perfect enlightenment) in the Lotus Sutra.

IOP researcher Hiroshi Kanno says, "The Lotus Sutra is established on the original enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha. Shakyamuni's realization of the Dhamma and the determination set forth in the Buddha's sermon, this is where the focus of the Lotus Sutra is placed and is built upon."<sup>6</sup> He also says, "It is said that under the Bodhi tree is where Shakyamuni was awakened to the Dhamma and the Saddharma. The compilers of the Lotus Sutra took the name of the Saddharma in Sanskrit equivalent to its Pali counterpart to use as the name of the sutra,

calling it *Saddharma-pundarika-sutra* (Lotus Sutra), and placing it as the ultimate law preached by all Buddhas.<sup>77</sup> The Lotus Sutra proclaims that it teaches the entrance of the path to enlightenment and *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* to Bodhisattvas. The Lotus Sutra aims to help people achieve the state of *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* through the experience of meeting the Buddha and manifesting the Dharma like the sun described in the *Udana*.

The Lotus Sutra was translated by Kumarajiva from Sanskrit to Chinese, and its teachings spread from China to the Korean peninsula to Japan, providing a spiritual and cultural foundation upon which the Japanese people developed their nation. The profound philosophy and heart of peace contained within Shakyamuni's Lotus Sutra is a spiritual heritage shared by all Asian people.

In the sixth century in China, the Lotus Sutra became the principal sutra of the Tiantai sect, and in Japan, Prince Shotoku also highly regarded its teachings. The Chinese Tiantai sect's theories based in the Lotus Sutra were adopted by the Japanese Tendai sect, and these theories helped enrich Heian culture.

Then, in the thirteenth century, Nichiren, who regarded the Kumarajiva translation of the Lotus Sutra as the most accurate description of Shakyamuni's enlightenment, adopted this sutra as the principal sutra for Nichiren Buddhism, and developed a system of practice for the salvation of humankind.

In this way, the goal of Buddhist humanism which is to construct a "larger self" rooted in the fundamental law of the universe to overcome all earthly desires and Shakyamuni's heart of peace was revealed and transmitted from India to Japan and throughout Asia.

This Buddhist humanism is a new model for humankind that will help transform civilization in the twenty-first century.

## **[II] The Establishment of the IOP and the First Fifty Years— Focusing on Academic Exchanges between India and Japan**

Shakyamuni's observation regarding the use of weapons in the *Sutta Nipata* quoted at the beginning of my talk has taken on a more serious meaning now more than ever in the twenty-first century as humankind faces the very real possibility of self-annihilation.

The "little water" reference can also be read as a metaphor for the planet Earth and her limited resources. Due to humankind's limitless greed and egoism, the Earth's natural resources, energy, and the ecosys-

tem, have either been used up or polluted to the extent that we have endangered the base of our own existence. Global warming, desertification, deforestation, pollution of the oceans, hunger and the reduction of biodiversity are issues that we face together as a planet.

However, despite these global threats, just as it was during Shakyamuni's time, or perhaps even to a larger degree now, people of today continue their belligerent ways through wars, conflicts and terrorist attacks. The causes of antagonism range from the widening gap between the rich and the poor, hatred of differences in nationalities, ethnic groups, or tribal affiliations, and prejudices against those of other religions or cultures. Current military technology includes weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear and biochemical weapons, and the deadly potential they have to destroy all human life on this planet is a "fear" that we must face.

Years before the dawn of the twenty-first century, on February 4, 1961, SGI President Ikeda stood in Bodhgaya, the sacred place where Shakyamuni attained enlightenment and the birthplace of Buddhist humanism. The first president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, died a martyr for the Buddhist ideal of peace, and the second president, Josei Toda, carried on this legacy by working to spread the Buddhist message of peace throughout Japan.

SGI President Ikeda, following in their footsteps, expanded the movement to a global scale, promoting the message of Buddhist humanism throughout the world to establish peace. It was on this journey, on his first trip to India, that he visited Bodhgaya, and began thinking about establishing our institute. The goal and significance of our establishment is recorded in detail in the novel, *The New Human Revolution*.

...Theravada Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam are the leading religions in many Asian countries, and they have been instrumental in shaping diverse ethnic cultures and traditions.

President Makiguchi said, "Don't judge things you don't properly understand." But hardly anyone in Japan today correctly apprehends these religions or cultures. To better understand our Asian neighbors and form an accurate picture of their religions, cultures and national characters, it will be important, I feel, to conduct in-depth study and research. Also, to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism, we will need to foster individuals who can conduct academic research specifically on the Lotus Sutra and introduce the humanism and pacifism of Buddhism to the people of the world.

For those reasons, I propose that we establish an institute for the

research of Eastern philosophy, culture, and ethnology.”<sup>8</sup>

The main points of his vision for our institute were:

1. To deepen understanding of Asian and world religions, cultures and ethnic traditions.
2. To conduct research on the Lotus Sutra.
3. To introduce Buddhist humanism and pacifism to people of the world.

The world religions, cultures and traditions mentioned in the first goal do not only include Theravada, Mahayana and Tibetan Buddhism, but also Chinese Confucianism and Taoism, Japanese Shinto and Indian Hinduism, as well as Islam and Christianity.

In regards to Lotus Sutra research, we basically take a philological and academic approach to the sutra itself, but also have researchers working on analyzing and developing contemporary interpretations of the content of the sutra. Developing interpretations is connected to the third mission, linking Buddhist humanism and pacifism to modern discussions on global issues.

To further clarify this third mission, it means creating and developing theories of peace based on Buddhist humanism which derives from Buddhist principles contained within the teachings in the Lotus Sutra. Within this framework are SGI President Ikeda’s wide-ranging dialogs with leaders across civilizations and religions.

Therefore, there is a strong need for development of Buddhist approaches to peace, human rights, women’s studies, the environment, economics, sociology, modern science as well as education and ethics. To summarize, it is necessary to produce theories on how to overcome the various global issues that confront humankind by engaging in dialogs across civilizations and religions.

For the past fifty years, our institute has endeavored to meet the expectations of the founder and make this vision a reality.

Allow me to introduce some of the activities our institute has undertaken in various fields:

- ① Establishing ties of academic exchange with institutes from around the world
- ② Hosting and participating in international symposia
- ③ Exchanges of academic personnel between India and Japan
- ④ Hosting exhibits centered on the Lotus Sutra and its manuscripts
- ⑤ Publication activities

### ① Academic Exchange Agreements

1. The International Academy of Indian Culture (Director, Lokesh Chandra) February, 1992
2. The Asiatic Society (General Secretary, Chandra Roy Chaudhuri) August, 1996
3. National Gandhi Museum August, 2003

We also have several exchange agreements with other academic institutions in India as well as China, Russia and Canada.

### ② International Symposia

1. Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of the IOP, an India-Japan Joint Symposium by The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), the IOP and members of the SGI Cultural Youth Delegation to India entitled, “Eastern Philosophy in the Twenty-first Century” August, 1991
2. Joint Symposium with the ICCR entitled, “Eastern Philosophy and Environmental Issues” August, 1992 in New Delhi, International Center
3. Joint Symposium with the National Gandhi Museum, entitled, “Gandhism and the Modern View of Buddhism” August, 2003 at the National Gandhi Museum
4. Joint Symposium with Dr. G. Ramachandran’s Birth Centenary Celebration Committee entitled, “Toward a Century of Non-violence and Peace—Gandhism and the Principles of the SGI” September, 2005 in the Toda Memorial International Center (Tokyo)
5. Joint Symposium with members of the Indian Committee to Study Gandhi to commemorate the Centennial Anniversary of Satyagraha entitled, “Satyagraha and the Declaration for the Abolishment of Nuclear Weapons” April, 2007 at the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (Tokyo)
6. Joint Symposium with the World Poetry Society, Soka Ikeda Women’s College and Bharat Soka Gakkai entitled, “Poetry for World Peace, Harmony and Human Rights” October, 2007 in Chennai, India

### ③ India-Japan Exchange

Our institute has dialogs and exchanges with the following individuals.

1. Karan Singh (Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

2. Lokesh Chandra (Director, The International Academy of Indian Culture)
3. Bishambhar Nath Pande (Vice Chairperson of the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti)
4. N. Radhakrishnan (Director of the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti)
5. Ravinder Kumar (Director of the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library)
6. Monkombu Sambasivan Swaminathan (President, Pugwash Conference)
7. Justice S. Mohan
8. A. Padmanaban (Vice President, World Poetry Society)
9. Sarvagya S. Katiyar (Vice Chancellor, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University)

#### ④ **Lotus Sutra Exhibits and Reprints of Manuscripts**

From the first series of manuscript reprints in 1997, we have published 10 series of 12 volumes of reprints. In addition, we held the first exhibit on the Lotus Sutra in November, 1998. We thank Dr. Chandra for attending that first exhibit. Since then, the exhibit has traveled to various countries overseas, and in India the exhibit was held in Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai co-hosted at various academic institutions.

One more event that deserves mention is the exhibit, “The Legacy of Humankind: The Buddhist Sutras—Exchanges between SGI President Ikeda and Dr. Lokesh Chandra.” The history of exchanges between Raghu Vira and Mahatma Gandhi and a number of Buddhist Sutras including the Lotus Sutra were displayed in this exhibit.

#### ⑤ **Publication Activities**

1. From July, 1987 we began publication of the English version of our journal, *The Journal of Oriental Studies*.
2. In June, 1988, *Humanity at the Crossroads*, a dialog between Daisaku Ikeda and Karan Singh, was published.
3. In December, 1990, *Buddhism: A Quest to Unity and Peace*, a book by Johan Galtung was published.
4. In May, 2005, *The Spirit of India*, a dialog between Daisaku Ikeda and Ved P. Nanda, was published.

In addition to the above, we have also published dialogs between Ikeda and other renowned intellectuals such as *Buddhism: A Way of Values* with Dr. Chandra, *Revolutions: To Green the Environment, to Grow the*



*Human Heart* with Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, and *Toward a Humane Century: Gandhi and Indian Philosophy* (published only in Japanese and Chinese) with Dr. N. Radakrishnan.

We celebrated our new departure as a public interest incorporated foundation on November 18, 2010. The areas of research for our newly restructured institute are as follows:

### **1. Lotus Sutra Research**

The first area of research will include studying the philosophical and ideological content, philological and historical research of the Lotus Sutra using the three major principles just mentioned. Along this vein, studies of the Lotus Sutra will be conducted from the compilation process in India, to contributions of Nagarjuna, and Vasubandhu, to Tiantai (天台) of China and Dengyo (伝教) of Japan, to Nichiren Buddhism. Furthermore, researching the contemporary significance of Nichiren Buddhism and the reprinting of manuscripts of the Lotus Sutra will also fall under this department.

### **2. Global Issues Facing Humankind and Religion— Toward Inter-religious Dialog**

This department deals with research pertaining to how Buddhism and the principles within the Lotus Sutra can be used to solve the global issues currently facing humankind.

In order to do this, we focus on how Buddhism relates to peace, the environment, women's issues, human rights and bioethics. In addition, we would also like to continue holding dialogs with other religions, philosophies and ways of thinking—for example, Hinduism, Gandhism, Islam, Christianity, Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto, as well as Theravada Buddhism and other sects of Mahayana Buddhism. By deepening understanding between different philosophies through dialog, we hope to contribute to building peace, symbiosis and ensure the continued existence of humankind.

### **3. Research on the Application of Buddhism in Modern Society**

We will conduct research on the contemporary application of Buddhism in the fields of education, humanity, peace, civilization and history, among others.

Based mainly on Buddhism, the Lotus Sutra, and Nichiren Buddhism, and incorporating ideas from educational studies, Eastern and Western philosophy and thinking, contemporary biology, medicine, and life sciences, we seek to establish a theoretical framework for the study of Bud-

dhist humanism and pacifism.

These three new departments will be the focus areas for our research. Our goal is to transform the current civilization, burdened with materialism which threatens our very existence and find solutions to global issues through Buddhist humanism. The following are examples of some of our main endeavors.

First is the publication of reprints of the Lotus Sutra. Last December, in Brazil, co-sponsored by the Brazilian Academy of Philosophy, we undertook an exhibit on the Lotus Sutra, and through the exchange with the National Archives of India, which recently began, we are planning to publish the Gilgit version of the Lotus Sutra.

The second is a series of books which is a culmination of Ikeda's philosophy on dialog—*Ikeda as Viewed by Leading World Figures*, *Daisaku Ikeda: Global Citizen*, and *Daisaku Ikeda and His Dialogs with Renowned Individuals*. The first book in the series is a collection of the reasons universities have awarded over three hundred honorary degrees to Ikeda. The second book lists the prerequisites for global citizenship, and how Ikeda has contributed in the fields of peace, environment, human rights, women's rights, civilization and culture. In the third book, the essence of the dialogs with world figures is condensed into one volume.

Some of the distinguished individuals from India mentioned in this third volume include:

- Vice Chancellor V. R. Mehta of University of Delhi
- Director Lokesh Chandra of The International Academy of Indian Culture
- Vice Chancellor Prem Chand Patanjali of V. B. S. Purvanchal University
- Vice Chancellor Bharati Mukherjee of Rabindra Bharati University
- General Secretary Amalendu De of The Asiatic Society
- Former General President Sarvagya S. Katiyar of the Indian Science Congress Association
- President Krishna Sirinivas and Vice President A. Padmanaban of the World Poetry Society

The main points of the dialogs with various individuals, including Dr. Chandra, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Swaminathan, and Prof. Ved P. Nanda, are also mentioned in this volume.

Our third main endeavor is the hosting of international symposia. In

December, 2010, we co-hosted a symposium with the Brazilian Academy of Philosophy entitled, “Modern Civilization and Philosophy.” Also, during our current visit, under the auspices of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, “Kumarajiva—Philosopher and Seer” was held, and some of our researchers presented on the Japanese view of Kumarajiva.

Today, we are honored by the presence of Dr. Lokesh Chandra and all of the Indian staff members who helped make this symposium possible. “The New Humanism for World Peace” celebrates the 50th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda’s inception of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy.

I eagerly look forward to hearing from our distinguished guests, and I will take their words as the spiritual and ideological impetus for our future growth both personally and as an institution. There is no greater joy than to be able to take this first step together with you in, the magnificent land of India. Thank you very much.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Sutta Nipāta*, 935, *THE GROUP OF DISCOURSES (SUTTA-NIPĀTA)*, vol. 2, trans. By K.R. Norman (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1995), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Sutta Nipāta*, 936, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> *Sutta Nipāta*, The latter half of 938, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> *Sutta Nipāta*, 939, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, “Mahayana Buddhism and Twenty-first-Century Civilization” (Address at Harvard University, Cambridge, September, 24, 1993), *A New Humanism: The University Address of Daisaku Ikeda* (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1996), pp. 154–55.

<sup>6</sup> Hiroshi Kanno, *Hokekyo no Shutsugen*, Okurashuppan, 1997, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Hiroshi Kanno, *Hokekyo Nyumon*, Iwanamishoten, 2001, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, *The New Human Revolution*, Vol. 3, SGI-USA, 1996, pp. 264–265.