

**Glenn D. Paige —
Professor Emeritus of the University of Hawaii
Daisaku Ikeda's Impressions of World Figures**

We have not yet attained a society in which human life is valued over all else.

We need to support each other, stresses Dr. Glenn D. Paige, professor emeritus of the University of Hawaii. If we encourage and support each other, victory will be ours. There are no heroes or heroines, he insists, in the nonviolence movement. The true "school of nonviolence" is made up of the people in towns and villages the world over who continue to encourage their friends, a smile never far from their lips. Dr. Paige voiced these sentiments on the occasion of receiving a fellowship from the Delhi School of Nonviolence in India [in November 1992].

The renowned American political scientist and educator also stated that the nonviolence movement — though perhaps not yet fully recognized — is a truly significant movement that reflects the tide of the times. It is also for this reason that Dr. Paige has continuously applauded the popular movement of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

The tide of the times. Yes, it is unquestionably surging with dynamic momentum from violence to nonviolence. There is no other way for the human race to survive. Mahatma Gandhi writes: "Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute."¹ And, to paraphrase Tolstoy: The human race must grow up. Just as a child grows into a youth and then an adult, the human race as a whole must transform itself so that it lives in a mature way that will lead to the creation of a nonviolent society.

American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as a spokesman for Americans of African descent who were tired of the physical and verbal abuse and the violence of social oppression to which they were subjected. He waged a nonviolent struggle, declaring: "I've seen too much hate to want to hate, myself."² Certainly the entire human race should feel this way after witnessing all too much death, violence and hatred this century.

The bullying that is presently of such concern in Japanese schools is another form of violence. And it is not merely a problem restricted to our children. Bullying in schools is nothing other than a reflection of the cruelty and lack of compassion found in the adult world. The sad fact, too, is that many of the media people who report on such incidents with somber faces are often the very ones who go about trampling on people's rights.

Those who work tirelessly to foster friendship — ordinary people who continue to support and encourage their friends, whether or not others see or recognize their efforts — are the ones who are in fact contributing to the creation of a nonviolent society. These anonymous men and women stand at the very forefront of the times.

The Courage To Go On

When everything we have always counted on is destroyed in an instant, what should we do?

Dr. Paige has found himself in such a situation. Slowly but inexorably, one of his firmly held beliefs — a belief that he had expressed publicly in speech and in print — was shattered. For a scholar, nothing is more tragic or painful.

Like many other Americans, Dr. Paige started out supporting the use of military

force. Fifty years ago, as a sixteen-year-old newspaper boy, it gave him much pleasure to deliver the newspapers that announced “the act that ended the Pacific War” — the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Several years later, while a student at Princeton University, Dr. Paige joined the army and fought in the Korean War (1950–52). Eventually he returned to school, later going on to Harvard University and Northwestern University, and writing his Ph.D. dissertation on why the United States fought in the Korean War.

Dr. Paige loved freedom and regarded wars against communism — an ideology that threatened individual liberty — as righteous wars. But from the 1960s, a military dictatorship ruled South Korea, and the United States supported it. Dr. Paige protested to the U.S. government, but it did no good. Dictatorial oppression of the people and their rights continued in South Korea through the 1970s. Dr. Paige was deeply disturbed at this turn of events: For what reason, then, had so many lives been sacrificed in the Korean War?

Learning the full extent of the damage wrought on Hiroshima also forced him to radically revise his beliefs. Dr. Paige is a person of great honesty.

One day, when he was thinking deeply about these questions that tormented him, he felt a great energy suddenly arise from within. It dawned on him like a light. A new conviction erupted from the depths of his being: Human beings must not kill other human beings under any circumstances or for any reason. The light of the ancient principle of “not killing” had broken through the darkness of the twentieth century to illuminate the twenty-first.

When the very basis of one’s existence or beliefs crumbles, it is easy to despair, to seek escape, or to blame one’s misfortune on others. But Dr. Paige looked reality straight in the eye and decided to fight. With determination and courage, he began a second life. This is indeed a powerful drama of human revolution.

From the day Dr. Paige realized that the very concept of a righteous war was a contradiction in terms, he turned his back on a political science that accepts the use of brute force and began to pursue his quest for a political science that is rooted in nonviolence. It was a completely new and unexplored area of study. Many American political scientists, for whom power politics was a given, found the concept hard to comprehend.

Dr. Paige notes that in America, citizens are permitted to own guns for their self-defense. But if we ask whether this creates a sense of security among the people, the answer is no. One of the main reasons why the large cities of the United States are so dangerous is that people carry guns. Here, Dr. Paige asserts, one can find an answer on a familiar, daily level to the larger question of whether being armed equals security.

He also observes that many scholars are equipped to give interpretations or commentaries on a given situation or problem but fail to offer concrete solutions to it.

Dr. Paige, however, is a scholar who believes in action. He has traveled around the world studying, leading seminars, engaging in dialogue, writing, pleading the cause of peace to political leaders, forging links among people and spreading the network of nonviolence.

Respect for Human Life

Dr. Paige is a man of great moderation, gentleness and humility. But when he talks of the arrogance of leaders who do not value human life, his gaze grows fierce. He says

he will never forget the words of a leader who decided to send U.S. troops to fight in the Korean War — a war in which millions of lives were lost. Dr. Paige asked this person if he, as a fellow Christian, had prayed before making his decision. The man replied in angry tones, “Hell, no!” insisting that his decision had been right, so he had just gone to sleep as usual. Does power paralyze the human heart so that it grows dulled to the preciousness of human life?

When Dr. Paige told me of this incident, I shared with him the story of Bodhisattva Fukyo (Never Despising), which appears in the Lotus Sutra. Enduring physical and verbal abuse, Bodhisattva Fukyo continued to believe that all people possess the Buddha nature, respectfully saluting everyone he met. To respect the life of each and every person — this is the spirit of nonviolence.

There is a saying, “You can’t shake hands with a fist.” The age of threatening people with brute force to induce them to obey one’s will is over. Dr. Paige has high expectations for Japan’s international contributions in such “soft power” spheres as culture, philosophy and humanitarianism.

When Dr. Paige suffered a heart attack a few years ago, I was deeply concerned and offered fervent prayers for his speedy recovery. Even after this bout of illness, Dr. Paige refuses to let anything distract him from his commitment to realizing a century of nonviolence, no matter what obstacles must be overcome. He will not give up as long as he has breath in his body, he declares. With great faith in human potential, he continues to press for a revolution of human values, saying:

An analogy is provided by the contemporary achievement of placing a human being on the moon. Long considered an impossible dream, it rapidly became a reality when vision, will, skill, science, technology, human organization, training, resources, and public support were combined to make it possible. Something similar can happen in nonviolent global transformation as the historical preconditions for it begin to converge and to interact with future vision.³

Hope has the power to change all. Such faith in humanity is the very marrow of nonviolence. As long as we keep the torch of hope ablaze, the popular movement toward nonviolence cannot fail to triumph. □

Footnotes

1. Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1950), p. 194.
2. Martin Luther King Jr., *The Trumpet of Conscience* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 74.
3. Glenn D. Paige, *Gandhi’s Contribution to Nonviolent Global Awakening* (New Delhi: Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, 1991), p. 17.