

## The Future Is...Beyond Words

*Fighting for peace.* Isn't that an oxymoron, like "jumbo shrimp" or "sweet sorrow"?

Albert Einstein is often quoted as having said that people cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war. Similarly, can we simultaneously use the vocabulary of violence and talk convincingly about nonviolence?

When we in the SGI-USA talk about fighting, we're not talking about subduing an external enemy per se. Rather, we battle our own fears, weaknesses and darkness. Even with regard to Nikken, who is clearly out to destroy us, we're also battling something internal: authoritarianism, which originates from mistaken beliefs and to which we're all susceptible. The actions we take against the manifestations of authoritarianism are the echo of our internal efforts.

In other words, we fight for peace by doing our human revolution — a nonviolent one.

Nonviolent revolution. Isn't that an oxymoron, too?

Mahatma Gandhi used the Sanskrit word *ahimsa*, which does not contain the passive connotation of the English word *nonviolence*. *Ahimsa* implies that when all violence subsides in the human heart, the state that remains is love. It is not something we have to acquire, Gandhi would say; it is always present and needs only to be uncovered. Our true nature is not just to love two or three people, but to be love itself. So *ahimsa* is more than just the absence of violence — it's an intense love.

For Gandhi, *ahimsa* in action is *satyagraha*. In Sanskrit, *satyagraha* means holding on to truth, and, to Gandhi, this meant the action of holding onto the deepest truth of existence: that all life is one and indivisible.

As Gandhi explained: "*Satyagraha* is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence."

Underlying Gandhi's commitment to nonviolence was the idea that evil, injustice and hatred exist only insofar as we support them. They have no existence of their own. Without our cooperation, unintentional or intentional, injustice cannot continue.

SGI President Ikeda, on his recent trip to India, praised the tradition of nonviolence demonstrated by the people of India and said that a new, holistic humanism must be based on this principle. "The fundamental failure of humanism in its various forms," Mr. Ikeda said, "has been a failure to fully believe in and trust people."

Gandhi likely would agree. He once said, "A *satyagrahi* bids goodbye to fear. He is therefore never afraid of trusting his opponent. Even if the opponent plays him false 20 times, the *satyagrahi* is ready to trust him the 21st time, for an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed."

Historian J.B. Kripilani, upon his first meeting with Gandhi, reportedly said: "Mr. Gandhi, you may know all about the Bible or the Bhagavad- Gita, but you know nothing at all about history. Never has a nation been able to free itself without violence."

Gandhi replied gently: "You know nothing about history. The first thing you have to learn about history is that because something has not taken place in the past, that does not mean it cannot take place in the future."

The future may have no limitations, but words do. The English language and most of the people who speak it are full of contradiction, paradox, imprecision and, yes, oxymoron. *Trust, nonviolence, kosen-rufu* — we have an idea of what these words mean, but we often feel their full meaning has yet to be realized. Their meaning is to be found, perhaps, beyond

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words — in the language of the human heart.

So maybe *fighting for peace* doesn't accurately or completely explain what we in the SGI are doing. But, for now, what else can we say? We're creating a new world — a world not based on the limitations of the past but born out of our dreams for the future. Maybe words can't fully describe this. As we discover new possibilities, how can we fail to discover new ways of communicating what's in our hearts?

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