

**A World Without War
Is It Possible?
By DEBORAH GOODWIN, Los Angeles Correspondent**

“If not now, then when...?” These words have been echoed by songwriters, poets and philosophers of every generation in America and throughout the world. If a time of peace has not yet come, then when? And when has a concerted world peace movement been more needed than at our present time in history?

Peacetime is defined in Webster’s dictionary as a time when a nation is not at war. A strangely transient definition, which communicates the uneasy reality that a time for war still looms in the future.

By contrast, the definition of the Buddhist term *kosen-rufu* is to widely declare and spread Buddhism, to secure lasting peace and happiness for all humankind through its propagation. The single phrase *lasting peace* denotes an incredible commitment that permeates both the present and the future. Lasting peace is the core mission of the SGI and its practicing members in 128 countries worldwide. On March 16, 1958, young people took responsibility for this peace movement, and their lasting commitment fuels all the efforts and activities of our organization.

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, addressing a gathering in Honolulu several years ago, spoke of humankind’s common desire for lasting peace: “Whatever country I visited, I found people yearning for lasting peace in the world. We [in the SGI] are working toward the eternal goal of global peace from a religious standpoint, specifically through Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism...it is my earnest desire to contribute to the realization of peace, culture and education based on true Buddhism.”

March 16 is a celebration of our resolve as an organization, and as global citizens, to carry out this legacy that has been handed to us. A world without war was the foremost concern and endeavor of Soka Gakkai presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda. Both men were products of war-torn Japan, and both experienced great personal loss during wartime. They had a deep sense of compassion for the collective losses endured and reflected in Japanese society and the world.

Each made a vow that he would do his utmost to ensure that the suffering caused by war be forever ended. These men dedicated their entire lives to the pursuit of lasting peace: Mr. Makiguchi, through his groundbreaking educational reforms, and tenacious assaults on an authoritarian government; Mr. Toda, through his uncompromising stance on the abolition of nuclear weapons and through sparing nothing of himself to raise youth who would carry this prayer across the world and into the future.

Daisaku Ikeda was one of these young people. Of those times with his teacher, Mr. Ikeda wrote: “It was at the age of 19, in the days immediately following the end of World War II, that I learned the noble way of peace from my mentor, President Toda.... I have devoted myself to our movement among the common people...to develop a magnificent global network of spiritual solidarity toward the goal of a world without war.”

To this end, Mr. Ikeda has held numerous dialogues and written extensively on the subject of peace. He has indeed created a forum for spiritual solidarity among people of all races and religions, from every walk of life and from all over the globe.

The concept of a world without war seems lofty, perhaps even unattainable. Yet there is certain proof of growing numbers of like-minded people the world over. Initiatives and organizations everywhere, including the SGI, are motivated by this principle and are uniting in the cause of lasting peace.

Peace will come about through these collective efforts — ongoing, tireless efforts that

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are creating the necessary ripple effect that will one day be an ocean of vast proportions. The Indian Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore wrote: “The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures....”

This best illustrates our interdependence as a society, a nation, a world — a universe in which each individual’s unique contribution toward the bright vision of lasting peace is essential.

On March 16, we remember those who forged this path of peace to today and take this opportunity to steady our course into the future.

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