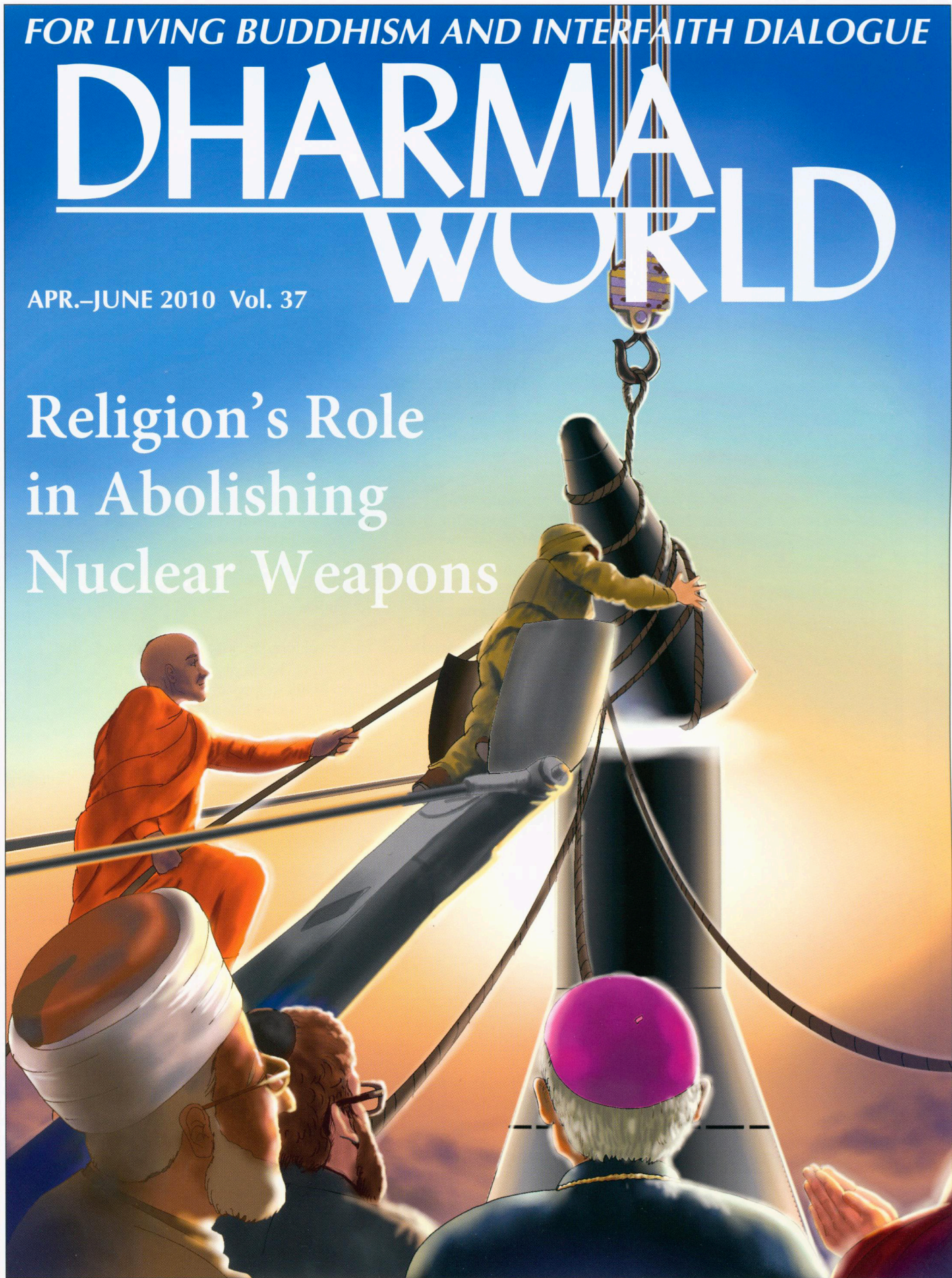


FOR LIVING BUDDHISM AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

DHARMA WORLD

APR.-JUNE 2010 Vol. 37

Religion's Role
in Abolishing
Nuclear Weapons



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DHARMA WORLD

For Living Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue

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Nuclear Disarmament Could Help End the War-and-Peace Dilemma

by Masamichi Kamiya

When the Nobel Peace Prize Committee announced that the prize for 2009 was being awarded to President Barack Obama of the United States, a controversy arose basically on two fronts. Some people argued that Mr. Obama had not yet achieved much on the world political stage, and some criticized the committee's decision by saying that he is the commander in chief of the U.S. military, which is currently fighting two wars, one in Iraq and the other in Afghanistan.

At the Oslo City Hall in Norway on December 10, 2009, Mr. Obama delivered his acceptance speech for the prize, in which he tried to respond to the above criticisms. But to me, his speech illustrated very clearly a dilemma arising from the consideration of issues of war and peace.

In his speech, while spotlighting the well-known achievements of Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, who are considered personifications of nonviolence, Mr. Obama stated: "I cannot be guided by their examples alone." Then he orchestrated his argument toward a "just war" to protect peace, justice, human rights, democracy, and so on. As long as evil exists in the world, Mr. Obama stressed, "the instruments of war do have a role to play in preserving the peace."

Here is the dilemma. In order to preserve the peace, war is justified and accordingly waged! This dilemma has been tackled for many centuries by many great individuals over the course of human history.

How can humanity overcome this dilemma, particularly in an age of nuclear weapons? The following are some of my thoughts, as someone who believes in the teachings of Buddhism.

First of all, people of religion must rediscover the doctrines of their respective faiths with refreshed eyes of love and compassion. Buddhism stresses: "Do not harm others because they care for themselves most, as you care for yourself most." In Christianity, it is said: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Love and compassion must prevail over hatred, anger, and ruthless discrimination against fellow human beings.

Second, even though war is justified in certain instances by decision makers in world politics, such as President Obama, we must not neglect the fact that any war waged definitely brings about overwhelming tragedy, which amplifies human suffering. In this regard, people of religion must be the strongest advocates for trumpeting the immorality of war. Nuclear weapons are the most detested tools of immorality for possible use in an act of war. Therefore, the voices of faith communities must be heard to say that nuclear weapons must be eliminated.

Third, although war is sometimes justified, it must be stressed that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is fundamentally against the rules of international humanitarian law. The international community must bear in mind that the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of July 8, 1996, said that "the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular, the principles and rules of humanitarian law." People of religion must not be strangers to international law, which guarantees the well-being of humankind from the legal perspective. They must also be aware of international legal standards.

Fourth, in view of the catastrophic power possessed by nuclear weapons, we must spare no effort in urging governments to heighten the threshold for using nuclear weapons from a threefold perspective, namely, (1) to reduce the number of nuclear weapons, (2) to reduce the role of nuclear weapons, and (3) to reduce the threat of those weapons. Governments are not exclusive players in dealing with the issue of nuclear weapons. Nongovernmental organizations, scholars, peace practitioners and advocates, the media, and people in civil society alike have an important role to play. Faith communities are no exception.

Nuclear disarmament is often thought of as an objective that peace-loving citizens of the world should seek. While still respecting that view I think nuclear disarmament should be regarded as a tool or vehicle that can help transform the world of war into a world of peace. If human beings are destined "to beat their swords into plowshares," they will someday eliminate nuclear weapons once and for all and bring about a civilized human society where the dilemma of issues of war and peace has vanished and the illegitimacy of war and armed conflict under any and all circumstances is fully observed. □

Masamichi Kamiya is the minister of Rissho Kosei-kai of New York. From October 1998 until March 2002, he served as a special research fellow at the Hiroshima Peace Institute, Hiroshima City University.

Photo: Science Photo Library/AFLO

The Trinity Test, the world's first detonation of a nuclear weapon, took place on July 16, 1945, in the Jornada del Muerto in New Mexico.

Photo: AFLO

The Titan Missile Museum in Green Valley, near Tucson, Arizona. Photographed in April 2003.

Nuclear weapon states and the estimated number of nuclear warheads they each possess. North Korea conducted nuclear weapon tests in 2006 and 2009, but it is not known whether it has any such weapons for actual use. Map based on data from Peace Depot.

The Heart of Nuclear Weapons

by Scilla Elworthy

Since we can no longer afford the luxury of competition, we are obliged—perhaps for the first time in human history—to learn how to cooperate on a national, international, and global scale.

In 1944, the young Joseph Rotblat joined a team of eminent nuclear scientists on the U.S. Manhattan Project, the sole aim of which was to build an atomic bomb. When Rotblat discovered that Germany was not developing an atomic bomb, he was the only member to leave the project on moral grounds.

Twenty-four years later the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was opened for signatures, and two years after that it entered into force. Under its terms, 184 nonnuclear countries have by now undertaken not to acquire nuclear weapons. Only four sovereign states are not parties to the treaty: India, Pakistan, and North Korea have openly tested and declared that they possess nuclear weapons; Israel does not yet formally admit to its arsenal. The five original nuclear weapon states—the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China—have undertaken to get rid of their nuclear weapons, under Article VI of the treaty. This undertaking was reaffirmed as late as the year 2000, in “an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all states parties are commit-

ted under Article VI.” They have not done so, nor designed step-by-step plans to eliminate their arsenals.

In 2005, just before he died at the age of ninety-six, Joseph Rotblat asked us to wake up to the reality that in this situation we are all in danger. He said, “There can be no peace and security in the world if the mightiest country does not conduct its affairs in accordance with the law.”¹

At the Heart of the NPT Is the Issue of *Us versus Them*

Nuclear weapon states continue to insist that other states should not acquire nuclear weapons, indicating that what is considered “good defense policy” for them does not apply to others. Thus a double standard is in operation. This perpetuates a dualistic approach to foreign policy, namely the separation between “us” and “them.” This approach means that

- international negotiations are perceived as a zero-sum game, where suspicion is the norm and each offer is made only on the basis of getting something else in return;
- short-term national interest is paramount, measured by economic or political gain; and
- states exist in the shadow of mutual threat and terror (termed euphemistically nuclear deterrence) that acts as a cancer corroding international collaboration.²

This dualism has been at the heart of our way of conducting international affairs for hundreds of years, and many people regard it as the norm. But we can no longer afford it. We can no longer afford to compete for power and use threats of annihilation. We know enough now about the global challenges to the continued survival of humans and animals on our planet that it has become obvious that coordinated and collaborative responses are essential—essential if life is to be possible in even one hundred years’ time.

Therefore the question of nuclear weapons proliferation is of immediate concern to us, because it is a potent symbol of the choices that we all—each and every human being—must now begin to make. Nuclear disarmament is essential not only to reduce the danger of holocaust, or accidental holocaust,³ but to take away a principal blockage to interna-

Scilla Elworthy, PhD, founded Peace Direct in 2002 in London to fund, promote, and learn from peace builders in conflict areas; previously she founded the Oxford Research Group in 1982 to develop effective dialogue between nuclear weapons policymakers worldwide and their critics. It is for this work that she was awarded the Niwano Peace Prize in 2003 and nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize. From 2005 she was advisor to Sir Richard Branson, Peter Gabriel, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu in setting up The Elders initiative.

tional cooperation. Eradicating this blockage will not only allow closer understanding but also take us a giant step in the direction of a cooperative world driven by opportunity and human connection.

What Could Be Done?

Humans have to agree on a series of interwoven plans to preserve life on the planet. Since we can no longer afford the luxury of competition, we are obliged—perhaps for the first time in human history—to learn how to cooperate on a national, international, and global scale.

We have a choice here. We can regard this as a blessing and an opportunity, or we can resist. Regarding it as a blessing means that we can solve humanity's main problems using the phenomenal advances in technology and communications that allow us to see and hear and get to know people living in entirely different cultures. Regarding it as an opportunity means that we can pool resources, talent, and employment to ensure a better standard of life for everyone. Resistance, on the other hand, means that we risk the destruction of life as we know it and that our responsibility to children and grandchildren is abandoned.

The choice for cooperation is underwritten by the concept of *interdependence* and holistic systems, now well understood by scientists, and understood for centuries by the great spiritual traditions.

Who Has Already Understood This?

Scientists know, and have known since before Einstein, that planetary forces—as well as the tiniest of cells—act as a global holistic system. This knowledge has accelerated and become widespread since James Lovelock, in his Gaia hypothesis,⁴ showed that living organisms and inorganic material are part of a dynamic system that shapes the earth's biosphere and maintains the earth as a fit environment for life. Other scientists have shown that the earth itself is an organism with self-regulatory functions. This is why scientists⁵—working alongside civil society⁶ in worldwide campaigns—are leading the way toward change in environmental policies.

In fact, any one of us can know the reality of these theories in an instant. All we have to do is observe our own body. Doing so, we witness a vast intelligence system at work: billions of cells—in the brain, the nervous system, bones, tissue, organs, skin, and blood—working in unison to grow, to repair, to refuel, to redesign, to respond, to reproduce, and to transmit hundreds of thousands of messages per second. Each of us lives inside an absolute wonder of synchronized cooperation. Yet our unconsciousness—so far at least—has us behaving as if we are not part of any larger system.

The greatest spiritual traditions have known about interdependence for millennia and the consequently obvious need for human cooperation with all living systems. The wise masters of the Taoist tradition never lost the understanding that relationship with nature was the key to staying in touch with

the source of life. The essence of Buddhism is compassion for every living thing, based on the fundamental understanding that we are all interconnected. Over a period of at least four thousand years, sages in India have repeatedly said that there is an underlying unity of all that exists, including everything we call animate or inanimate, and that the cultivation of wisdom consists in the realization of this truth. *Ubuntu*—the ancient code of conduct emanating from southern Africa—echoes the basic principles of interdependence that are found at the heart of the belief systems of many ancient indigenous peoples.

This Greater Intelligence Could Apply to Politics

Our knowledge of human behavior suggests that humanity has the capacity to behave both destructively and creatively, and this in part is shaped by political environments. Our history of war and destruction, not least in the twentieth century, would suggest that our capacity to do harm is enormous. However, there are also simultaneously multiple examples of humankind's ability to work collaboratively together and to protect those beyond their own family and kinship networks. The recent earthquake in Haiti is an example of the international community's ability to respond with great speed and concern.

At heart, every human being longs for connection, warmth of human contact, affection, and peace. Politicians are no different. But sometimes they have to be reminded that the people they represent want them to lead in more skillful ways.

So our task is to open a dialogue with the individuals responsible for major decisions on nuclear weapons, decisions that affect all of our lives. We can suggest ways to act wisely and skillfully and demonstrate that they will receive a great deal of public support if they do.

The timing is right, for three reasons. First, governments are desperate to save money in the wake of the disruption to national economies from the recent financial crisis; nuclear weapons programs are extremely costly, and cutting them would generate substantial savings. Second, since terrorism is the main threat we apparently face, the public does not see the point of nuclear weapons anymore, because they are useless against a terrorist. Third, opinion polls show the public to be ahead of governments in policy proposals and increasingly impatient of their slow-moving pace relative to perceptions of global crisis.

The Eighth Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons—where substantial changes in the treaty could be made—will be held May 3–28, 2010, in New York. The numbers of people worldwide who are responsible for preparing this crucial conference are in fact very few. We can get in touch with them, go to see them individually, and engage them in the kind of policy changes that would now make sense. These changes can then be proposed to the political leadership.

The new policy should state clearly the commitment to

the elimination of nuclear arsenals in accord with the NPT pledge and include the design of step-by-step plans to achieve this goal, including the following:

- De-alerting the weapons currently on high-alert status
- Pledging *no first use* of nuclear weapons
- Convening the nine states with nuclear weapons to begin negotiations on agreeing upon a treaty for the phased, verifiable, irreversible, and transparent elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2020
- Investing the money saved by the cancellation of new nuclear programs in a multilateral fund to oversee the security of the fissile materials resulting from dismantling weapons

Leaders could also be encouraged to recognize, as did Albert Einstein and Joseph Rotblat, that the challenges we now face demand not only the abolition of nuclear weapons but the abolition of war. For too long, countries have sought to prevent war by preparing for it. World military expenditure in 2008 is estimated to have reached \$1.464 trillion in current dollars. This represents a 4 percent increase in real terms since 2007 and a 45 percent increase over the ten-year period since 1999. This corresponds to 2.4 percent of world gross domestic product, or \$217 for each person in the world. By contrast, the United Nations and all of its agencies and funds spend about \$27 billion each year, or about \$4 for each of the world's inhabitants.⁷

Now the time has come to prevent war by preparing for peace. Cultures of peace can be, and are being, built—the first examples are Costa Rica, which has abolished its armed forces, and Ghana and Kenya—countries that are building Infrastructures for Peace⁸ or methodical means of preventing violent conflict and educating for peace.

In conclusion, we can see that nuclear disarmament demands deep cultural changes, and so this is where spiritual and religious groups can have the most impact. They can do this by highlighting the ancient wisdoms that have relevance to the deep transformations required, and by engaging with officials and others in a spirit of love and understanding, not recrimination. This is not only more consistent with our spiritual roots, it is also more effective. This means working with the deep-seated fear and cynicism that pervade official negotiations, and helping people overcome them in favor of cooperation and mutual respect.

The crisis of our times is not only an ecological and political crisis but a spiritual crisis. The answers we seek cannot come from the limited left-hemispheric consciousness which currently rules the world, but could grow from a deeper understanding born of the union of mind and soul, helping us to see that all life is one, that each one of us participates in the life of a cosmic entity of immeasurable dimensions. The urgent need for this psychic balance, this deeper intelligence and insight, this wholeness, could help

us to recover a perspective on life that has been increasingly lost. It has been lost to the extent that we have come to live without it—without even noticing it has gone—not recognizing the existence of any dimension of reality beyond the parameters set by the human mind. It is a dangerous time because it involves transforming entrenched belief systems and archaic survival habits of behavior that are rooted in fear and ignorance, as well as the greed and desire for power that are born of these. But it is also an immense opportunity for evolutionary advance, if only we can understand what is happening and why.⁹ □

Notes

1. Joseph Rotblat, "*The Nuclear Threat Is as Real as Ever*," March 2003, updated August 2005.

2. See the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation Web site: <http://www.wagingpeace.org/>.

3. Since 1942, there have been fifty-nine military accidents involving nuclear material, known as "Broken Arrows." A Broken Arrow is defined as an unexpected event involving nuclear weapons that results in the accidental launching, firing, detonating, theft, or loss of the weapon. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_military_nuclear_accidents, <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Almanac/Brokenarrows.shtml>.

4. James Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

5. A campaign initiated by thirty Nobel Prize laureates and the International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility (INES), <http://www.inesglobal.com>, who have been active at events in Hiroshima. The campaign is linked to the Russell-Einstein Manifesto and appeals to the scientific community to support the abolition of nuclear weapons. Twelve million signatures for a nuclear weapon-free world, which the Japanese peace movement collected during the NPT PrepCom conference in 2009, serve as a model. Contact the INES program director, Reiner Braun, who represents INES at the international preparatory committee: reiner.braun@inesglobal.com.

6. Take for example the organization Avaaz: Their petitions, fundraisers, rallies, and lobbying campaigns are able to rapidly and effectively mobilize people power all over the world to support the greatest needs and concerns of all human beings. In less than three years, they have grown to more than 4 million engaged citizens in every country of the world—operating in fourteen languages—and have begun to make a real impact on global politics. *The Economist* writes that Avaaz is poised to deliver "a deafening wake-up call" to world leaders, the *Indian Express* welcomes "the biggest web campaigner across the world," and Nobel Prize winner Al Gore says "Avaaz is inspiring, and has already begun to make a difference." www.avaaz.org.

7. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook on Armaments, Disarmament and International Security for 2008: <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2009/05>.

8. Paul van Tongeren, "Infrastructures for Peace," http://www.friendsofeurope.org/.../P_van_Tongeren_Infrastructures_for_Peace_Sept_2009.pdf.

9. Anne Baring, article for the Scientific and Medical Network. See <http://www.annebaring.com>.

Religion and Politics

by Steven Lloyd Leeper

In confronting the problem of nuclear weapons, we are being forced to confront far more fundamental questions. What kind of global system do we want to live in? Do we want to continue living in a political system that worships winning and power?

Never discuss religion or politics during dinner,” they say. (I hope you’re not eating.) But why this stricture against the world’s most interesting topics? According to my grandfather, “argument is bad for digestion.” We avoid religion and politics precisely because we are so apt to argue about them.

Given the tendency of religious discussion to lead to conflict, the mere existence of the World Conference of Religions for Peace appears as impossible as the flight of a bumblebee. Religions for Peace is a nongovernmental organization seeking to bring mutually contradictory religious bodies together in cooperation toward political ends. One can only assume that despite their differing claims about the nature of God and the laws of the universe, the religions involved have found “peace” to be a political objective they can agree to pursue together.

The world conference of Mayors for Peace is likewise impossible. This nongovernmental organization brings Indian, Pakistani, Palestinian, Israeli, U.S., Iraqi, Iranian, Russian, Chinese, European, African, and Latin American mayors together across a broad political spectrum to pur-

sue, despite mutually contradictory political ideologies and commitments, a genuinely peaceful world free from nuclear weapons.

In May 2009, these two impossible organizations formally brought religion and politics together in a joint effort to abolish nuclear weapons. The success of this venture will depend heavily on the ability of these NGOs to reach beyond their membership to activate the constituencies that stand behind those members.

The members of Religions for Peace are, officially, religions, but that, of course, means religious leaders or representatives of certain religious groups. To what extent can those religious leaders communicate with and mobilize the billions of lay members in their denominations, sects, churches, temples, mosques, and synagogues? The thirty-five hundred members of Mayors for Peace are mayors. To what extent can those mayors communicate with and mobilize the 600 million citizens they represent?

The vast majority of people and nation states on Earth wish to rid this planet of nuclear weapons. A recent opinion survey in twenty-one nations, including all the nuclear-armed states, found that 77 percent of the populations surveyed wish to live in a nuclear weapon-free world. Last November, Japan’s resolution in the UN General Assembly calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons was supported by 171 nations and opposed by 2 with 8 abstentions. In 1996 the International Court of Justice, the highest court on our planet, declared that nuclear weapons are illegal under international humanitarian law and that all nations are legally obligated to negotiate their elimination. If the world were a democracy, nuclear weapons would have been gone decades ago. Somehow, the majority is unable to exert its will.

Here are the problems: (1) certain extremely powerful individuals, corporations, and other groups have been earning enormous profits from nuclear weapons for decades, (2) some of these powerful individuals and groups still believe they can use nuclear weapons to dominate the world, (3) many otherwise kind and reasonable people still believe in

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the old-fashioned and thoroughly discredited concept of nuclear deterrence, (4) the great majority have been hypnotized by the nuclear industry to believe that nuclear weapons are as inevitable as death and taxes (they would prefer a nuclear weapon-free world but do not believe such a world is possible), and (5) the hypnotized majority are completely asleep to the current nuclear weapons crisis.

These are the solutions: (1) the individuals and groups profiting from nuclear weapons can be given decent jobs cleaning up the radioactive mess they have made, (2) believers in deterrence can be asked to contemplate the deep implications of nuclear terrorism and nuclear winter, and (3) mayors and religious leaders can begin shouting in unison, "Wake up! Fire! Emergency! We're in trouble here!"

The Nuclear Weapons Crisis—Part I

Forty years ago, just after China got the bomb, five nuclear weapon states decided it was in their best interest to limit the number of nuclear weapon states to five. They approached the rest of the world saying, "We will be nuclear weapon states and you will not. In return, we will help you with peaceful uses of the atom, like electricity and medical applications. Okay?"

However, right from the beginning, the nonnuclear weapon states said, "No, that's not enough. In addition, you have to recognize that this agreement is a temporary solution. The real solution can only be the total elimination of all nuclear weapons." Thus, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), signed in 1968, includes Article VI, which calls for good-faith negotiations toward nuclear disarmament and, eventually, a nuclear weapon-free world. The nuclear weapon states have been promising for forty years to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

Today, the number of nuclear weapon states has almost doubled from five to nine, and many of the nonnuclear weapon states are deeply frustrated by the failure of the nuclear weapon states to take any convincing steps toward

a nuclear weapon-free world. To them, it appears that first-rate nation status, national sovereignty, and even national pride depend on possession of nuclear weapons. How long, for example, can the Arab nations of the Middle East allow Israel to be the only one in the neighborhood with nuclear weapons? In fact, how long will the international community allow the five original nuclear weapon states to be the only permanent members of the UN Security Council and the only states with veto power over everything that happens at the United Nations? Thus, we stand at a perilous crossroads. In the next few months or years, the human family will decide whether to eliminate nuclear weapons or let everyone have them.

The Nuclear Weapons Crisis—Part II

But the nuclear crisis is deeper than the danger of proliferation. Nuclear weapons have always been controlled by the elite of the world, those at the highest levels of money and power. The elite enjoy the world as it is. The current political and economic system made them rich and powerful. They compete among themselves, but they have no desire to bring the whole system down. This elite self-interest, plus dumb luck, has prevented a third nuclear attack for sixty-four years.

Meanwhile, the current global economic and political system has created painful levels of poverty and violence for more than 50 percent of the human beings on this planet. The gap between rich and poor in the United States today is worse than it was in 1929 before the Great Depression and World War II. Meanwhile, we are entering an era of power realignment and intense resource competition, even as climate change destroys human habitat, plunging billions into chronic hunger and turmoil. Intelligent, well-meaning people around the world believe deeply that we are, simply by living the way we do, gradually making this planet unlivable. Thus, the number and the power of those who want to destroy the system are growing.

One reason we now have a real opportunity to eliminate

Steven Leeper (far left) and (at his left) Hiroshima's mayor, Dr. Tadatoshi Akiba, take part in a discussion of the abolition of nuclear weapons with representatives of Religions for Peace in New York in May 2009, at the time of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

nuclear weapons is that the elite are getting scared. They are starting to understand that as nuclear weapons spread around the globe, they become more likely to fall into the hands of someone who will use them. Those who want to destroy the system do not play the power game according to elite rules. If they were to obtain a nuclear weapon, they would use it. In fact, they would die to use it, and they would use it in such a way as to provoke maximum retaliation. People who are willing to die and hope to provoke retaliation cannot be deterred.

Desperation, rage, and self-sacrificing commitment render meaningless all power-game calculations based on dominance and rule by fear. Whether out of hunger, jealous rage, or a righteous desire to save the planet from its most destructive inhabitants, attack with a nuclear weapon would be the quickest and easiest way to bring down a system that billions of human beings experience as cruel, painful, and ecocidal.

The Nuclear Weapons Crisis—Part III

But the nuclear crisis is deeper than the danger of nuclear terrorism. According to F. William Engdahl in his book *Full Spectrum Dominance*, U.S. neoconservatives (those in power during the George W. Bush administration), along with powerful elements of the U.S. military-industrial complex, still harbor the delusion that with a good missile defense system, they can achieve “nuclear primacy,” that is, the ability to launch a nuclear first strike anywhere on Earth, including Russia and China, without fear of reprisal. Once established, nuclear primacy would allow the United States to control all other countries, dominate the world's resources, and maintain the “American way of life” at the expense of the rest of the planet.

To readers of *DHARMA WORLD*, the pursuit of world domination may sound like science fiction lunacy, but such ambitions are the natural extension of the pursuit of dominance that has made human history a series of rising and falling empires. While slaves have slaved to avoid punishment, while peasants have struggled to feed themselves and pay their taxes, while soldiers have honed their fighting skills for the next battle, while craftsmen and merchants have sought wealth through production and trade, while administrators and clerical staff have kept records and filed papers in the right drawers, while scholars and scientists have studied nature, while artists and musicians have found and expressed new aesthetic concepts, while religious leaders have helped people relate to God and death—kings, queens, emperors, presidents, and CEOs have always plotted to expand their empires, bringing as many lands, people, and dollars as possible under their control. This is what the people on top have always done, and it is what they are doing now, but they have two big problems.

The twin threats of nuclear weapons and environmental disaster are challenging the very concepts of dominance, enmity, victory, and rule by brute force. Nuclear weapons make it impossible for the United States or any other entity to dominate the world. (Anyone with a nuclear weapon can destroy the whole system the dominators are trying to dominate.) At the same time, these weapons and several looming environmental crises are forcefully raising the question of collective survival, and this question lies at the heart of the choices that human beings must now make as a species.

Not long after the bombing of Hiroshima, a Japanese philosophy professor named Ichiro Moritaki revealed the deep meaning of the atomic bomb: human beings can no longer



On August 22, 2006, participants in the Youth Assembly of the Eighth World Assembly of Religions for Peace face the Atomic Bomb Dome as they pray for victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

resolve their conflicts through all-out contests of destructive power. Long before any talk of climate change, Moritaki realized that to survive on Earth human beings would have to find new ways of resolving their conflicts. To do that, he argued, we would have to graduate from the civilization of power and build a new civilization of love.

Today, the need to move beyond enmity and cutthroat competition is obvious to all but our aggressive, competitive, selfish war-culture leaders. While they continue to fantasize about winning a nuclear war, the rest of us know that such a war will lead to utter ruin. While they continue to protect the profits they gain from oil, gas, and coal, the rest of us know we need to put the environment ahead of profit. We are a single human family. We will live or die together. And yet, some continue to think only of themselves or their families, tribes, religions, or corporate sponsors.

In confronting the problem of nuclear weapons, we are being forced to confront far more fundamental questions. What kind of global system do we want to live in? Do we want to continue living in a political system that worships winning and power? Must we continue to prop up an economic system in which the vast majority of human beings are condemned to lonely, painful, fearful lives of back-breaking work, violent competition, and suffering while those with capital let their money do the work while they enjoy leisurely lives of extravagant opulence? Do we believe that peace and prosperity will come when the United States, Russia, China, or some other state or group of states finally establishes firm control of all of the world's oil, water, and other resources? Do we believe that competition, dominance, and weapons can keep our oceans alive, replenish the oxygen in our atmosphere, and stop global warming?

Or would we prefer to live in a system where the collective goal is happiness for all? Can we learn to see conflicts as problems to solve to the benefit of all parties? What if all parties were making every effort to meet the needs of all other parties? What if all companies were nonprofit, working for the benefit of society rather than the further enrichment of a few rich people? What if we rejected violence completely and considered anyone resorting to violence for any reason to be a criminal or mentally ill? What if all military establishments were dismantled and those funds devoted to unmet human needs?

What kind of leaders can guide us into a civilization of love? Should we admire, trust, and follow those who accumulate great wealth and control of others? Or those who learn to control themselves and demonstrate an ability to live on next to nothing? Should we follow those who promise to kill for us? Or those who would die to avoid killing? Should we follow those who work hard to create a heaven on Earth for themselves or those who work hard to make Earth a heaven for all?

In the next year or two, as the human family decides what to do about nuclear weapons, we will simultaneously be deciding whether to solve our global problems through

Hiroshima's mayor, Dr. Tadatoshi Akiba, speaks at the Sixth General Conference of Mayors for Peace, in Hiroshima in June 2006.

dialogue, treaties, and international law or by means of a bloodbath that will make World War II look like a picnic. By allowing the existence of nuclear weapons, we grant to a few highly aggressive, competitive warriors the power to terminate human evolution, thereby ending all hope of graduation from the culture of dominance and war to a culture of partnership and peace. If, on the other hand, we take those obscene weapons away from our warriors, we will simultaneously initiate the most profound elevation of human consciousness since the development of language. We will be telling our leaders, our warriors, and ourselves that partnership, not dominance, is the key to happiness and survival.

The question is called. It is time to choose. Mayors for Peace requests that you visit www.citiesarenottargets.org, where you will find the materials you need to ask your mayor to join Mayors for Peace. We also ask you to pay attention to the nuclear crisis and play an active role in the 2020 Vision Campaign. Religions for Peace asks you to promote Arms Down! a new campaign launched by religious youth demanding nuclear and general disarmament (a 10 percent reduction in military expenditures). You could help them meet their goal of fifty million signatures. Both organizations will be doing their best to mobilize peace-loving people around the world. Will they succeed? In part, that's up to you. □

Turning Japan toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

by Hiromichi Umebayashi

The thinking that Japan must rely on nuclear arms has deep roots in the nation's defense and diplomatic establishments. There is, however, a countervailing force—the endeavor to abolish nuclear weapons by a nation that has firsthand experience of nuclear devastation.

Opportunities are now available for humankind to proceed in the direction of a better world without nuclear weapons. This is because signs of change are now seen in the United States, the world's strongest nuclear power, whose influence reaches around the globe.

The first evidence of change turned up at an October 2006 symposium at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University. The event marked the twentieth anniversary of the October 1986 Reykjavik summit, where Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, then the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union, respectively, met near the end of the Cold War and reached agreement on the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The symposium reconfirmed the importance of this goal in the current international political context, and the participants agreed to take action by appealing for the goal's realization. One result was the statement that appeared in the January 4, 2007, issue of the *Wall Street Journal* titled "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons" by four bipartisan and widely known former members of the U.S. government: the former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, former secretary of defense William Perry, and for-

mer Democratic senator Sam Nunn. Their view gained broad support among U.S. politicians, and it had a strong impact on the 2008 presidential election.

The popularity of this cause has by no means been confined to the United States. Support for it transcends party lines and has spread among former top public officials in such major countries as Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, and Australia. As this current moved around the world, U.S. president Barack Obama endorsed it in his April 2009 speech in Prague, and the UN Security Council pledged to back efforts "to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons" in Resolution 1887 of September 2009. The resolution was adopted at a Security Council summit presided over by Obama, where the four former high-ranking U.S. officials were watching over the proceedings, presenting a sight symbolic of the tide of the times.

It is highly significant that the UN Security Council, which has potential binding power, has set its sights on the elimination of nuclear weapons. While there is still only a low level of agreement on concrete measures for achieving this goal, there can be no doubt that herein is an opportunity that deserves to be seized.

Marking Time in Japan

Unfortunately, in the three years between the Hoover symposium and the Security Council summit, almost no new political activity got under way in Japan in response to the rising global tide of nuclear arms reduction. By contrast, in Germany, in a January 2009 statement, former chancellor Helmut Schmidt (Social Democrat), former president Richard von Weizsäcker (Christian Democrat), and other former high officials publicized their endorsement of the position taken by Shultz, Perry, Kissinger, and Nunn and, based on their country's historical and current conditions, they came out in favor of a treaty among nuclear weapon states prohibiting nuclear first use and also called for the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from German territory.

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General secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev and U.S. president Ronald Reagan meet in the Hofdi, a house in Reykjavik, Iceland, on October 11, 1986, for a series of talks.

Photo: AP / AFLO

Similar moves to take advantage of the new situation and exert influence on the central political sphere were not to be seen among former high officials in Japan. The absence of action is emblematic of the reality that must be addressed if Japan is to play a role in the abolition of nuclear arms.

Twenty days after Obama's Prague speech, then Japanese foreign minister Hirofumi Nakasone delivered an address titled "Conditions towards Zero: 11 Benchmarks for Global Nuclear Disarmament." This, though, was basically just a restatement of the Japanese government's existing position, and it was extremely lacking in fresh content and new perspectives. Nakasone spoke of the factors producing uneasiness in Japan's vicinity, mentioning China and North Korea, and stressed the importance of nuclear deterrence under the Japan-U.S. security arrangements. But he did not declare that

Japan, as a country that has suffered from nuclear attacks, is firmly convinced of the urgent need to abolish nuclear weapons. In effect, his speech merely reinforced the impression that on this question, our nation is sticking to a passive stance.

This can also be seen in the action by parliament. Some two months after the Prague speech, both houses of the National Diet (parliament) adopted resolutions calling for stronger measures to eliminate nuclear weapons. The content of the resolutions, however, gives no sense of an intention to add momentum to the tide of global disarmament.

Deeply Rooted Reliance on Nuclear Arms

Extensive exposure by the media revealed that the Japanese diplomatic corps, in its dealings with the United States

Photo: Reuters / AFLO

U.S. president Barack Obama outlines his vision of a world without nuclear weapons, in Hradcany Square, Prague, on April 5, 2009.

Atomic bomb survivors (hibakusha) of Hiroshima and Nagasaki joined this protest against nuclear testing by Pakistan, on May 29, 1998, before the Memorial Cenotaph for atomic bomb victims in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

around that time, was acting to counter accelerated progress toward nuclear disarmament.

In May 2009 a bipartisan commission established by the U.S. Congress to examine strategic issues released a report titled "America's Strategic Posture." The document contains an overall assessment of the role that nuclear weapons play for the United States and presented recommendations. The document is sure to have an impact on the nuclear posture review currently being assembled by the Obama administration. As the commission conducted its assessment, it asked the allies of the United States for their views. Reportedly, officials in the administration of former prime minister Taro Aso responded and handed over a three-page memo presenting the Japanese government's request that nuclear weapons be retained. Tokyo, we are told, hoped the United States would develop earth-penetrating nuclear weapons for destroying underground bunkers and facilities, and it asked for consultation before the U.S. submarine-launched nuclear Tomahawk cruise missiles are retired.

Requests like these surely provided excellent ammunition to the American conservative camp, which is resisting the constructive arms reduction policy of President Obama. The refrain of the old guard constantly portrays the U.S. nuclear umbrella as a key element holding allies back from developing nuclear arms of their own, emphasizing that the umbrella in this sense makes a contribution to nuclear nonproliferation. In effect, the Japanese government has strengthened the grounds for this position.

In June 2008 Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd proposed the establishment of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), and Japan agreed to serve as the commission's cochair. Actually this was an initiative taken separately from the aforementioned global current aimed at a world free of nuclear weapons. Fortunately, though, fresh possibilities in the work of the commission emerged in September 2009 when a truly new government moved into power in Japan. It seems that

the Japanese change of government had a positive impact, at least to some extent, on the final-stage drafting of the ICNND report. Also some positive elements of the report are expected to be utilized by the new government, whose nuclear disarmament policy is deemed to be more progressive.

Envisioning a Nuclear Weapon-Free Northeast Asia

The thinking that Japan must rely on nuclear arms has deep roots in the nation's defense and diplomatic establishments and among the specialists who back them up. Even today it holds sway in policymaking circles spread too widely to be ignored. There is, however, also a countervailing force. This is the endeavor to abolish nuclear weapons by a nation that has firsthand experience of nuclear devastation, and it is being propelled firmly forward by Japanese civil society.

In recent years, this force has gained increased impetus for spreading its message internationally. It is being promoted by the movement of the atomic bomb survivors, known as *hibakusha*, by widely spread campaigns against nuclear bombs, and by drives launched by local governments, with Hiroshima and Nagasaki leading the way. The wellspring of this vitality is the consciousness of the unparalleled inhumanity of nuclear weapons born from the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as sympathy with the principle behind the rallying cry of the survivors: "No more *hibakusha*!" The meaning of this principle is that Nagasaki must be the last place to suffer nuclear destruction, that henceforth these weapons must not be used against anyone, and that, toward this end, all nuclear weapons must be eliminated.

The political stagnation produced in Japan by a long succession of conservative governments condoned and even widened the gap between this thinking in civil society and the thinking of the policymaking brains. In this light, the current situation of dependence on nuclear weapons on the level of Japanese policy needs to be understood as arising from a different historical background than that of other

American allies, such as the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The sense of dependence came to take hold in Japan only with popular will alienated in a historical context where even rudimentary democracy had not begun to function.

Today, thanks to Japan's change of government, a variety of institutional reforms are being attempted, and new possibilities have opened up for civil society's demand that nuclear weapons be abolished. The power of these possibilities has, moreover, been strengthened by the arrival on the global stage of favorable conditions for realizing a world free of nuclear weapons, as I mentioned at the outset. In these circumstances, there is more need than ever before for Japan to have a concrete vision to replace its dependence on nuclear arms. This must be a vision transcending the conventional thinking of government officials and policy specialists, who operate on the assumption that Japan must either rely on a nuclear umbrella or acquire its own nuclear capability.

One such compelling vision is the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in Northeast Asia. The NWFZ is already an internationally recognized mechanism for achieving regional security by banning nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement. It also represents a step toward regional peace relying not on military force but on legal provisions and consultations. A number of specific schemes for creating such a zone have been proposed, including our proposal at the Peace Depot for a Three plus Three Nations Arrangement.*

By holding this vision aloft and adopting the stance of a true nuclear weapon-free state, Japan could recover its moral

From left to right: Cochairs of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Yoriko Kawaguchi and Gareth Evans, Japanese prime minister Yukio Hatoyama, and Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd attend the report presentation ceremony at Hatoyama's official residence in Tokyo on December 15, 2009.

ground as the world's only victim of nuclear bombing. This would enable our country to move to the starting point for the first time to play a major role in the quest of a world free of nuclear weapons. □

* The Three plus Three Nations Arrangement would be a six-party treaty for a NWFZ covering the geographical territory of Japan, South Korea, and North Korea and endorsed by the United States, Russia, and China, which would provide "negative security assurances" not to use nuclear weapons against the three nations within the zone.

1. 1967 Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
Effective April 25, 1969
2. 1985 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty
Effective December 11, 1986
3. 1995 Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
Effective March 27, 1997
4. 1996 African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
Effective July 15, 2009
5. 2006 Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia
Effective March 21, 2009
6. In 1992 Mongolia declared its nuclear weapons-free status (one-state nuclear weapon-free zone)
Internationally recognized since February 2000
7. 1959 Antarctic Treaty
Effective June 23, 1961

Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones

Central Asia's Commendable Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone

by Tsutomu Ishiguri

The treaty setting up the zone by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan is a concrete contribution to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ) Treaty entered into force in March 2009. This achievement should be highly commended as a concrete contribution by the nonnuclear weapon states (NNWS) in their implementation of Article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in regional treaties.

In February 1997, the presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (the five Central Asian states, or C5) issued the Almaty Declaration, which expressed their united view on the need to proclaim Central Asia a nuclear weapon-free zone (NWFZ). This idea was introduced to the UN General Assembly (UNGA), and it adopted resolution 52/38S. Thus the establishment of an NWFZ has become the agenda of the international community through a regional initiative.

The CANWFZ Treaty has the following characteristics.

An NWFZ should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the states of the region concerned, and this initiative should emanate exclusively from

those states (according to UN document A/54/42, Annex 1, on the establishment of an NWFZ). CANWFZ fully met these conditions.

This is the first NWFZ treaty established in the Northern Hemisphere. All four existing NWFZs are in the Southern Hemisphere.

CANWFZ includes the territory of a former nuclear weapon state. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Kazakhstan became the fourth largest nuclear weapon state. Kazakhstan renounced nuclear weapons, became a state party to the NPT as an NNWS, and joined many disarmament related conventions and treaties.

The zone consists of landlocked states. Preexisting NWFZs include areas of the sea.

The treaty reflects recent developments in the field of disarmament, such as the basic obligations of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and accession to the Additional Protocol and the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials.

The treaty refers to the relationship with other agreements. The interpretation of the 1992 Tashkent Collective Security Treaty became a contentious issue. If a wider interpretation is accepted on "all necessary assistance" rendered by signatories of the Security Treaty, it might imply that the introduction of nuclear weapons to Central Asia would conflict with the principles of CANWFZ seeking a zone free from nuclear weapons. As a result of three years of intensive consultations, the C5 worked out language of compromise. Whereas China and Russia support the language, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France strongly opposed this solution. There appears to be almost no possibility of the deployment of nuclear weapons of France and the United Kingdom in this region. U.S. opposition contradicts its view that "the establishment of a NWFZ should not disturb existing security arrangements to the detriment of regional and international security or otherwise abridge the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense guaranteed in the UN Charter."

The direct involvement of the United Nations in the drafting process was helpful in preparing acceptable articles.

Tsutomu Ishiguri, a professor at the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, is former director of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. As its director he organized numerous international conferences, including nineteen UN conferences in Japan on disarmament, and played an important role in assisting Central Asian states in drafting the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which entered into force on March 21, 2009.

Water filled this crater created by nuclear testing at the Semipalatinsk proving ground.

UNGA resolution 52/38S requested the United Nations to provide assistance to the C5 for their drafting of the CANWFZ Treaty. In response to the C5's request, the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) created a UN Expert Group in order to promote the drafting process through the organization of a number of meetings in the region, including those held in Sapporo, Japan.

Why was this exercise successful? Some answers are that, victimized by the past nuclear activities conducted by the Soviet Union, the C5 were firmly united to take actions toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons. From the issuance of the Almaty Declaration to the adoption of numerous UNGA resolutions, the C5 had consolidated consensus on the early agreement of the treaty text. Through this exercise, the C5 increased confidence among themselves. While working hard to materialize CANWFZ, this long last exercise helped to develop a sense of community in Central Asia. The C5 genuinely wished to contribute to disarmament and nonproliferation and to combat nuclear terrorism.

At the crucial stages of negotiations, leadership was demonstrated at the highest level of the C5. We appreciate the important role played by the president of Uzbekistan for his organization of the 1997 Tashkent meeting, where the work on CANWFZ started, and his continued support of CANWFZ as one of his diplomatic priorities. Furthermore, we should praise the crucial decision made by the president of Kazakhstan in hosting a signing ceremony in Semipalatinsk despite the strong pressure from within and outside the United Nations.

The involvement of the United Nations was essential for the successful conclusion of the CANWFZ Treaty. In addition to providing technical and substantive advice to the C5,

the UNRCPD acted as an honest broker to resolve differences and overcome impasses caused by C5 rivalries.

Nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation have become an agenda of the international community since U.S. president Barack Obama's statement in Prague in April 2009 calling for a world free from nuclear weapons. It is expected that the CANWFZ Treaty, having entered into force, should be given due recognition at the May 2010 NPT Review Conference and that the lessons of CANWFZ can be utilized for the creation of NWFZs in other regions. □

Photo: Reuters / AFO

Representatives of the five Central Asian states pose in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, on September 8, 2006, after signing an agreement to create a nuclear weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The event commemorated the fifteenth anniversary of the closing of the Semipalatinsk proving ground.

Shared Security: the Path Forward to Save Humanity

by Yoshiaki Sanada

Human security can only be manifested in real terms when grounded in a renewed understanding of security as viewed from the standpoint of shared human dignity, human rights, and human needs.

Last year, the Japanese government changed hands, and the country's new political leader, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, addressed the sixty-fourth United Nations General Assembly on September 24, 2009. In his speech, he pledged Japan's proactive support for the civil administration in Afghanistan in order to promote stability and reconstruction in that country. Also, in addressing the need to achieve reconciliation and reintegration with anti-government forces, he declared: "The path forward that will save humanity is one which can bring about 'shared security.'"

The phrase "shared security" quoted by Mr. Hatoyama in his speech was coined at the Eighth World Assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace held August 26–29, 2006, in Kyoto, the birthplace of that international multi-religious organization. The theme of this conference was "Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security," and shared security was the key concept discussed.

More than eight hundred religious leaders from more than one hundred countries representing the world's major faiths

and religious traditions attended the conference. These religious leaders used the above-mentioned theme as the main topic of their discussions, which attested to the global proliferation of violence in the form of military disputes and the spread of genocide, terrorism, poverty, hunger, disease, the human slave trade, environmental destruction, and more. They also talked about the need to confront and find ways to put an end to these various forms of violence and inhumanity. Participants drew up and presented a practical vision and mutually pledged to carry out action to implement their vision in practical ways.

Competitive military buildups are accelerating in today's world. Although it is true that nuclear-armed countries like the United States and Russia are moving toward an overall reduction in the number of their nuclear weapons, the trend toward nuclear proliferation outside the five major nuclear-armed countries is growing. In fact, one Asian military leader, General Deepak Kapoor, the chief of staff of the Indian army, said at a seminar in New Delhi on November 23 last year, "The possibility of a limited war under a nuclear overhang is still very much a reality, at least on the Indian subcontinent."

In the context of this kind of international nuclear military buildup and its hidden dangers, I was very heartened to hear Prime Minister Hatoyama espousing the concept of shared security as advocated by the representatives of the world's religions who gathered in Kyoto and calling on the world's political leaders gathered at the United Nations to recognize that "the path forward that will save humanity is one which can bring about 'shared security.'" I would like to express my wholehearted respect for the courage and wisdom shown by Mr. Hatoyama in his role as a government leader.

From Human Security to Shared Security

The United Nations and other international organizations are now being confronted with provocative issues related to the attempt to achieve world peace and security. As was widely

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reported, in 1994 the United Nations published its Human Development Report, which dealt with this issue and introduced the then new concept of "human security."

Naturally, the discussions at the Religions for Peace meeting also encompassed this concept. Representatives of the many faiths gathered at the Sixth World Assembly of Religions for Peace held in November 1994 at the Vatican and Riva del Garda in Italy, and also at the Seventh World Assembly in November 1999 in Amman, Jordan, mutually pledged to work toward "common human security."

In 2006, this concept evolved into the idea of shared security as expressed in the Kyoto Declaration on Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security.

understanding of security as viewed from the standpoint of human dignity, human rights, and human needs that is based on the sharing of the values common to all of humanity, involving compassion, consideration for others, and respect and reverence for the dignity of life, as well as the awareness of the spiritual solidarity that is shared by the entire human family.

The Toyako Summit and Shared Security

The concept of shared security based on this type of understanding and awareness attained new strength at the World Religious Leaders Summit for Peace: On the Occasion of the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit held July 2–3, 2008 in Sapporo, Japan.

World religious leaders at the Eighth World Assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace pose for a commemorative photo in the Kyoto International Conference Center. The assembly concluded with their adoption of the Kyoto Declaration on Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security.

A clear-cut delineation of the shared security concept cannot be found in the Kyoto Declaration, but its meaning can be inferred from the following quotation from that document:

War, poverty, disease, and the destruction of the environment have direct or indirect impacts on all of us. Individuals and communities deceive themselves if they believe they are secure while others are suffering. Walls can never be high enough to insulate us from the impacts of the genuine needs and vulnerabilities of others. No nation can be secure while other nations are threatened. We are no safer than the most vulnerable among us.

It is widely understood that the security provided by nation-states does not necessarily guarantee peace; human history testifies to this fact. As can be seen from how the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States occurred and how those incidents led to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, an integral aspect of today's global reality is the constant danger that violence will erupt, leading to a still more unstable world. The concept of human security can only be properly manifested in real terms when it is grounded in a renewed

poro, Japan. This gathering, with most of the participants from Religions for Peace, was held to draw up a document of suggestions from the religious leaders to present at the international summit of top leaders from the G8 countries gathering in Hokkaido to discuss measures for dealing with global issues.

As representatives of the host country, the Japanese Committee of Religions for Peace convened several meetings to reach a deeper understanding of shared security—the key concept of the Religions for Peace Summit—and a unified consensus was attained. Our Japanese committee used a process of religious dialogue based on Japanese religious traditions to identify the following six factors and principles on which a theoretical construction of shared security could be built:

1. A shared, universal awareness that all people are members of a partnership encompassing the entire planet (a global community)
2. Mutual interdependence—recognizing that threats to others are threats to oneself and that the security of others is equal to one's own security
3. Reverence for the dignity of the life not only of human

beings but of plants, animals, and all living things in nature

4. Special consideration and support for the most vulnerable

5. Awareness that the past, present, and future are linked in a single continuum and consciousness of our common responsibility to future generations

6. Cooperation among all entities, starting with religious organizations and the faithful and including national governments, international organizations, and the various organizations in civil society working for peace

The concepts in this summary of the wisdom of the representatives of Japan's religions fortunately found favor with the representatives of the world's religions gathered in Hokkaido and were included in the summit's declaration.

Toward Abolishing Nuclear Weapons

The idea of shared security has already moved from prayer to action, from concept to practice. On November 7, 2009, in Costa Rica, the Religions for Peace Global Youth Network launched the Arms Down! Campaign for Shared Security.

The campaign has proposed the following three main objectives toward its goal:

1. Abolition of nuclear weapons
2. Ending the proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons such as cluster bombs, land mines, and small-scale arms
3. Redirecting 10 percent of the world's military expenditures toward achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals by 2015

Young people in the Japanese Committee of Religions for Peace have joined hands with other youths of various faiths around the world in one of this movement's activities, a worldwide petition campaign. In order to make the concept

of shared security a reality by extending its spirit to every country, they are aiming to collect the signatures of 50 million people around the globe, including 10 million in Japan. The petition will be submitted at the end of the campaign to the UN secretary-general, to member countries of the UN Security Council, and to heads of state and members of nationally elected representative bodies of all nations.

So far, human history has been a history of war. A review of this human history shows that lack of understanding and prejudice invite suspicion and mistrust among individuals as well as among peoples and nations. It must be obvious that such suspicion and mistrust have frequently led to war. We should learn from our unhappy history to recognize the need to talk with each other, to work to understand and trust one another, and to work together. The spiritual and moral solidarity of all the people of the world who seek lasting peace should be able to serve as the wellspring to move us to realize the importance of acting to make the world a better, more secure, and peaceful place.

The current competition in nuclear weapon possession occurring between India and Pakistan is symbolic of the way relations between nuclear-capable countries are progressing toward accelerated ownership of such weapons. The frightening degree to which this is taking place may be beyond remedying through nuclear nonproliferation agreements. We need to concentrate our thinking on the reality that the tragedy of Hiroshima could be repeated at any time. In order to prevent such a catastrophe from ever happening again, we must promote meaningful action for peace by raising our voices in protest against the continuation of such terrifying military weapons programs. The Arms Down! Campaign for Shared Security of young people representing the world's religions can go a long way toward strengthening the movement to realize the shared security of our planet. □

Fourteen world religious leaders representing Religions for Peace deliver the statement adopted at the Religious Leaders Summit for Peace in Sapporo to Japanese prime minister Yasuo Fukuda at his office in Tokyo on July 4, 2008, for him to present at the G8 Hokkaido Toyoko Summit.

An Enduring Mission: Religion's Work for Nuclear Disarmament

by Allison Pytlak

Ridding the world of nuclear weapons is a monumental task that will necessitate cooperation and trust, overcoming narrow national interests and boundaries. But it is not easy work and will require cooperation from many sides.

Man's continued existence on this planet is threatened with nuclear extinction. Never has there been such despair among men.

—The World Conference of Religions for Peace, Kyoto Declaration, 1970

The words above were written in 1970 in Kyoto, Japan, during the First World Assembly of Religions for Peace—the world's largest and most representative multireligious coalition. That same year, a landmark agreement called the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) entered into force, bringing with it the hope that nuclear war could be permanently averted through complete disarmament.

But forty years later, those sentences are still frighteningly relevant. As the international community prepares to evaluate the NPT during an important review conference in May 2010, it is imperative that Religions for Peace continue its own mission in this regard with renewed vigor and conviction.

Disarmament has always been an area of special significance for Religions for Peace. The organization was established in the midst of the Cold War at a time when the earlier momentum for disarmament negotiations was beginning to slow and the movement needed to be energized. The abolition of nuclear weapons was seen by many people as absolutely central to the creation of peace.

Moreover, nuclear disarmament was a topic of great interest to Homer A. Jack, the first secretary-general of Religions for Peace. His expertise as a clergyman, pacifist, and social activist provided the framework for effective and forward-looking action across the entire organizational network.

An Issue for All

Nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to the human family and are unconditionally immoral and unacceptable. All religious traditions affirm the ultimate value of life and call on us to respect it. Therefore, the promise of a nuclear weapon to destroy all of creation—human, animal, and even the planet itself—is an affront to that which all religious traditions value.

That the number of weapons continues to grow in the stockpiles of only a few nations enables divisions and defines the concept of security in a one-dimensional way. This is a definition that creates insecurity by populating the world with more tools of violence and more fear. It perpetuates inequality. A tiny handful of nations holds the existence of humanity captive and simultaneously proclaims that others have no right to acquire nuclear weapons. A challenge to equality is a challenge to the establishment of goodwill among all persons. Simply put, there is no use for nuclear weapons that is consistent with moral principles, civilized values, and humanitarian law.

The Religions for Peace Approach

The disarmament work of Religions for Peace is rooted in its notion of "shared security." Shared security can also be understood as a new political paradigm that echoes the holistic notions of peace found in the world's great religions. It recognizes that each person's vulnerability is an invitation to approach others with compassion and that our interrelatedness calls us to cooperate to protect all people and our planet.

Allison Pytlak is the disarmament program coordinator at Religions for Peace. In this role, she has not only mobilized religious leaders and networks to advocate the ban on cluster munitions but also developed programming on a range of disarmament issues, including small arms, land mines, and nuclear weapons. She actively represents Religions for Peace on the NGOCDPS and as a writer for the First Committee Monitor.

It is a vision in which the security of one person depends on that of all others, and no one is safer than the most vulnerable among us.

Shared security was advanced by eight hundred senior religious leaders from more than one hundred countries at the Religions for Peace Eighth World Assembly in Kyoto in 2006. Before that, it found concrete expression in more than thirty-six years of advancing nuclear disarmament through collective statements, publications, partnership building, and advocacy.

This began in 1970 at the First World Assembly. There, disarmament formed the subject of a plenary address from Dr. Hideki Yukawa of Japan, a Nobel laureate in physics. Disarmament found a place in the final declaration that was issued by the assembly. It stated that “clearly peace is imperiled by the ever-quickenning race for armaments, the widening gap between the rich and the poor within and among nations, and by the tragic violation of human rights all over the world. In our consideration of the problems of disarmament, we become convinced that peace cannot be found through the stockpiling of weapons. We therefore call for immediate steps toward general disarmament, to include all weapons of destruction—conventional, nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological.”

Those in Kyoto pledged that Religions for Peace would do all in its power to “educate public opinion and awaken public conscience to take a firm stand against war and the illusory hope of peace through military victory.”

The pledge was put into practice shortly after Religions for Peace began to establish itself as an important and unique voice in the antinuclear community. One of its first activities was to launch the *Disarmament Report*. This was a series

of reports produced over three years that explored disarmament and security issues from a nonaligned and primarily religious perspective. It was produced by Religions for Peace and the United Methodist Church, and later with the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy.

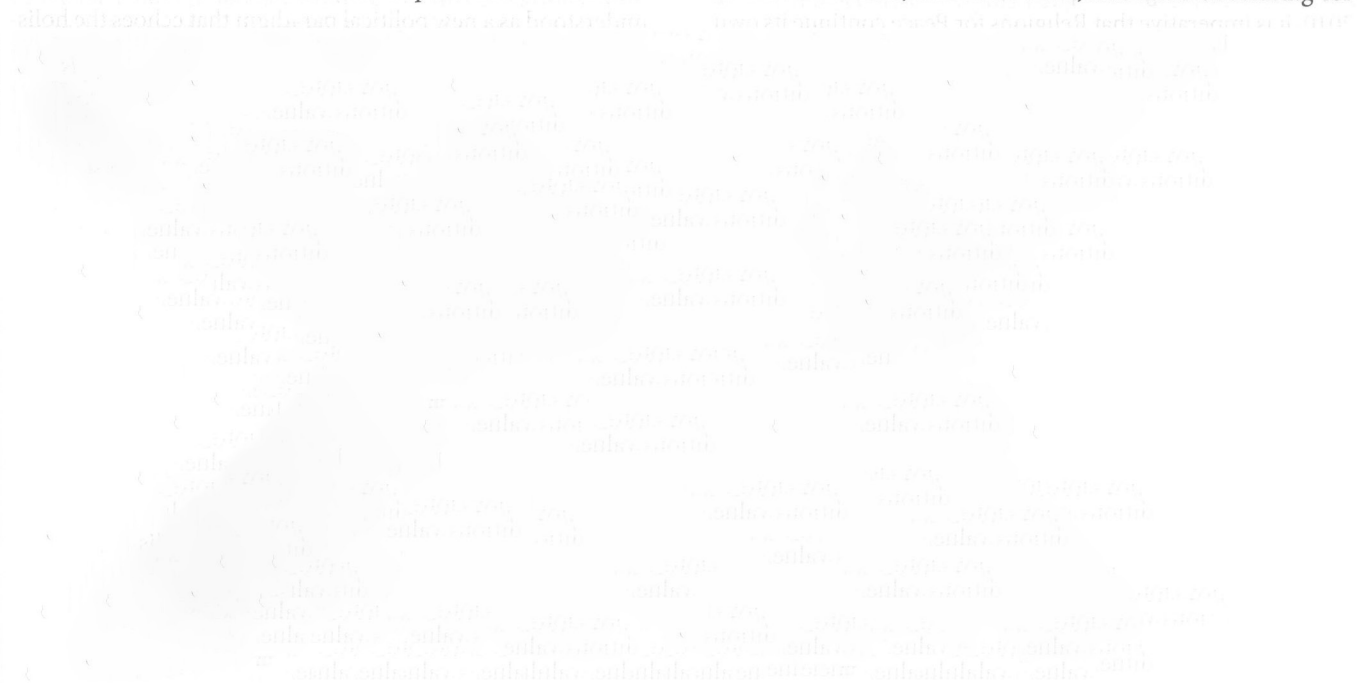
Religions for Peace also played a central role in the development of the NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security (NGOCDPS) at the United Nations in New York. This committee, as well as its counterpart in Geneva, grew out of the recognition that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have a right to representation as enshrined in the UN Charter. Representation and access to the United Nations has traditionally been easier for some groups than others, and in the climate of the 1970s disarmament NGOs faced a great challenge in having their voices heard.

Adopting a “strength in numbers” approach was one way to overcome this barrier. As such, in 1973, the secretary-general of Religions for Peace—based in New York—convened the first meeting of what became the NGOCDPS. The committee acts as an important liaison between the NGO community and the UN Secretariat. It is still in active existence today and has established a solid reputation for providing services and facilities to hundreds of citizens’ groups concerned with the peace and disarmament activities of the United Nations. Religions for Peace is a leading member of the committee.

Urging a New Appraisal of National, World Security

The formation of this committee proved to be important throughout the 1970s, when the movement for a special UN session devoted entirely to the subject of disarmament emerged. The idea for an open forum that would engage all member states, and NGOs too, had been circulating for

UPI / KYODO



Three quarters of a million people participate in a demonstration for peace and disarmament in New York on June 12, 1982.

nearly two decades, but it was not until much later that it happened. When it did, Religions for Peace was at the forefront of advancing what became the 1978 First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD I). Religions for Peace devoted an article to the subject in a 1972 *Disarmament Report*. As well, the organization advocated strongly for the General Assembly resolution that ultimately made the session a reality. It helped to facilitate briefings for diplomats and public awareness events and also helped to launch a new publication called *Disarmament Times*.

A unique aspect of SSOD I as compared with other UN meetings was that it allowed NGOs a space in which they could present their views to diplomats. To deliver the address, Religions for Peace invited its honorary chairman and president of Risho Kosei-kai, Rev. Nikkyo Niwano, who emphasized the need for general and complete disarmament. Other Religions for Peace affiliates had been chosen by their own organizations to speak as well, including Shri Radhakrishna of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Sean MacBride of the International Peace Bureau, and Chief K. O. K. Onyioha of the Organization of Traditional Religions of Africa.

A second Special Session was convened three years later, and this time, even larger numbers of civil society were permitted to make presentations over a two-day period. This time, Secretary-General Homer A. Jack spoke on behalf of Religions for Peace during the NGO session and was joined by nearly a dozen affiliates nominated by their own organizations. Religions for Peace played a leading role in organizing what became the largest demonstration in North American history, when three-quarters of a million people gathered at the United Nations and walked to Central Park in support of peace and disarmament.

Outside the United Nations context, Religions for Peace was able to use its special platform for dialogue and cooperation to advance disarmament with nuclear powers. This was illustrated most vividly in a 1982 mission to China. The purpose was to show that world religious leaders urgently wanted a stop of the drift toward nuclear war. A ten-person mission representing five world religions and six countries—India, Japan, Pakistan, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States—was organized and received by a member of the State Council of China and the leader of the Chinese delegation to SSOD II. Discussion focused mostly on what civil society was requesting of governments during the upcoming SSOD II. Afterward, the Chinese hosts noted their surprise in finding that they shared a common language with the delegation of religious leaders on the subject of nuclear war. This served to reinforce perception that religion is a uniting force and can be instrumental in bridging divisions between nations.

Toward the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s, the focus of the Religions for Peace disarmament agenda broadened to give greater consideration to the threats posed by conventional weapons. It also sometimes overlapped with the organization's work on conflict resolution. Much of this

The First World Assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace was held October 16–21, 1970, in the Kyoto International Conference Center. Rev. Nikkyo Niwano can be seen (front row, third from left) attending the plenary session.

work was carried out by the Standing Commission on Disarmament and Security, which had been established in 1998. The SCDS has enabled the organization to maintain a well-rounded disarmament program that addresses small arms and light weapons, land mines, and most recently, cluster munitions. It has included both religious leaders and outside experts.

In late 2009, the Global Youth Network of Religions for Peace launched a year-long disarmament campaign called Arms Down! Through education, mobilization, and advocacy, the campaign will advance shared security by working to reduce nuclear and conventional weapons and to reallocate military spending to support urgently needed development, as set forth in the Millennium Development Goals. One critical goal is to ensure a positive outcome of the youth network's active interest in this issue over the coming year, which signifies that disarmament will remain a priority with a new generation of religious leaders.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

The history of the Religions for Peace disarmament program has also been closely connected to the history of the NPT. Both came about in the same year, and as the NPT has been a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament efforts for four decades, it has also been a natural focal point for much of the organization's work on disarmament.

The NPT is a multilateral treaty that was negotiated between 1957 and 1968 before entering into force in 1970. Some 190 states have ratified the NPT, becoming "states parties" to the treaty. India, Israel, and Pakistan have not signed or ratified the treaty and have developed nuclear weapons since its entry into force. North Korea did ratify the treaty

but announced its withdrawal in 2003. NPT states parties meet every five years to review the treaty's progress.

The NPT centers around three main conditions. First, "non-nuclear weapon states"—those that do not possess nuclear weapons—agreed neither to seek nor to manufacture nuclear weapons and agreed to accept safeguards on their nuclear activities. Second, all states, including the five "nuclear weapon states"—the United States, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, France, and China—agreed to pursue negotiations toward nuclear disarmament. Third, all states agreed to recognize the "right" to develop and use nuclear energy without discrimination.

What seemed like an intelligent formula for containing and eliminating the nuclear threat did not work out so neatly in reality. The vast majority of nonnuclear weapon states have complied with their agreement not to obtain the weapon, but those who already possessed it did not and have increased their stockpiles over time. The result has been a heightened level of disagreement between the nuclear and nonnuclear weapon states that hampers their ability to work together under the treaty.

Discord reached its peak during the 2005 Review Conference. There, states parties failed to agree on an outcome document largely because of the disagreement between nuclear weapon states and nonnuclear weapon states. Those with the weapons emphasized the importance of strengthening nonproliferation efforts and focusing on specific cases of actual and suspected noncompliance with the treaty, and the latter emphasized the importance of compliance with and implementation of past disarmament obligations. As a result of the failure in 2005, the coming review conference in early 2010 faces high pressure to address these divisions in a meaningful way.

Religions for Peace has participated in every NPT Review Conference and will continue to do so in May. Many of its diverse delegations to the conference will be young religious leaders advancing the Arms Down! campaign goal of strengthening the NPT to achieve complete nuclear disarmament.

A New Momentum

This conference also comes at a unique moment in time. Nuclear disarmament has not been a high priority for most people for many years and has been overshadowed by other threats. However, in the last year, there has been a growing chorus of world leaders and public figures demanding nuclear disarmament. Suddenly, hope has returned.

Ridding the world of nuclear weapons is a monumental task that will necessitate cooperation and trust, overcoming narrow national interests and boundaries. But it is not easy work and will require cooperation from many sides. Religious leaders have a pivotal role to play, as they possess the genuine morality, spirituality, and compassion necessary to overcome narrow national interests and boundaries. As Religions for Peace enters its fortieth anniversary year, it is as equally committed to the task as ever and ready to move forward with courage, wisdom, and moral conviction. □

We are representatives of diverse religious traditions committed to working together on the basis of shared moral concerns. We share a common moral conviction: We must all work together to eliminate nuclear weapons, reduce overall defense spending and invest in the common good. We can and must work together to build peace.

—Religions for Peace Executive Committee
Statement on Nuclear Weapons, 2008

Participants in the Inauguration of the Global Youth Campaign on Disarmament for Shared Security met in San José, Costa Rica, in November 2009 to discuss nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament.

Religion Holds the Key to Disarmament

An interview with the Venerable Gijun Sugitani

On January 29, when the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was approaching, DHARMA WORLD interviewed Ven. Gijun Sugitani, a Japanese Tendai cleric and the chairperson of the International Standing Commission on Disarmament and Security of Religions for Peace, on religion's role in making the abolition of nuclear weapons a reality.

What is your frank opinion of American President Obama's speech in Prague on nuclear weapons in April of last year?

Inasmuch as he expressed his hopes for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the tide toward disarmament has temporarily swelled. It was a statement that gave people hope. In October the First Committee of the UN General Assembly [Disarmament and International Security] discussed a draft resolution proposed by Japan for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. For the first time, America was among the countries cosponsoring such a resolution. Among matters that were debated were an early date for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to enter into force, and arms control. So there has been movement in the direction of eliminating nuclear weapons. The political world has come alive in response to Obama's speech. I think the groups that are active in the field of nuclear weapons elimination were encouraged, feeling a push from behind.

After World War II, America defended its dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, justifying their use by saying that it was not a mistake, that it was necessary to bring the war to an end quickly and avoid increasing the number of American and Japanese victims.

President Obama said that America "has a moral respon-

sibility" to promote the elimination of nuclear weapons. Although the Japanese mass media have stressed only that phrase, he was actually saying that America has a moral responsibility, as the only nuclear power to have actually used nuclear weapons, to take action to eliminate nuclear weapons. If that is the case, however, I wonder if America doesn't also have a moral responsibility for using nuclear weapons on a general population under the pretext that it was necessary to end the war. Be that as it may, Mr. Obama's statement that America "has a moral responsibility" has had a huge impact on the campaign for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

What do you think is the most important thing for realizing the elimination of nuclear weapons?

If we don't correctly understand what nuclear weapons really are, the elimination of nuclear weapons becomes simply an arms control issue. If it's only done in a manner based on the similar concept of conventional weapons reduction, the elimination of nuclear weapons cannot be accomplished. It's necessary to firmly grasp this ethical basis—nuclear weapons are the ultimate evil that negates human existence itself. Unless many people, not just survivors of the atomic bombs, share an awareness of the dire consequences brought about by nuclear weapons, I don't think the campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons will go well.

Of course, when it comes to nuclear weapons, America always bears the brunt of criticism. It's the only country to have dropped an atomic bomb, and it has the most clout in the world. But although it's important to try to influence

Ven. Gijun Sugitani, chief priest of the temple Enjuin, Tokyo, is an executive advisor to the Tendai Buddhist denomination in Japan. He serves as the chairperson of the International Standing Commission on Disarmament and Security of the World Conference of Religions for Peace and has also served as secretary-general of the Japanese Committee of Religions for Peace.

"... nuclear weapons are the ultimate evil ..."

America and seek action from it, there is also the question of how to retain the cooperation of the other nuclear powers in eliminating nuclear weapons. In particular, we people of religion living in the world of today have not discussed the issue of nuclear weapons very much before now.

For certain, the world's people of religion have held conferences before the meetings of the G8, and have made many proposals aimed at the G8 participants. Particularly at the 2008 Summit at Toyako, Hokkaido, we made a proposal, from a Japanese standpoint, regarding nuclear disarmament. But at different times there have been seemingly more "timely" issues, and many previous conferences have been centered on issues of the environment, or issues of global climate change. Even when nuclear weapons issues were put on the table, the discussions never got into much depth, and the statements opposing nuclear weapons were simply rehashes of prior proclamations.

What is the role of NGOs in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons?

For the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] to work, it's essential that there first be a policy to get rid of the nuclear weapons that now exist, and for that, the issues of safeguarding the nuclear weapons arsenals have to be well in hand.

At the Sixth NPT Review Conference in 2000, for the first time the entire committee adopted the Final Document, which included a clear promise of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It didn't go so far as to set a date for their

elimination, but compared to prior conferences, this was big progress. Now it becomes essential to determine the schedule for it. The reaching of an agreement at the Sixth Conference was due in no small way to the negotiating strength of the New Agenda Coalition and the strong support of NGOs. As the chairperson of the International Standing Commission on Disarmament and Security of Religions for Peace, I hosted a symposium at UN Headquarters during that conference, inviting influential panelists such as Ambassador Thomas Graham Jr. As the U.S. special representative to the United Nations in 1995, Graham played a leading role in the decision to extend the NPT indefinitely. We worked from the sidelines on consensus building for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The fact is, things took a turn for the worse at the Seventh NPT Review Conference in 2005. This was because international tensions became immediately heightened by the simultaneous terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001.

Many other provocations happened, such as North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT and its nuclear weapon tests, Iran's suspected nuclear weapon development, as well as the issue of nonintervention with nuclear states such as India that haven't signed the NPT. As a consequence, the conference failed to produce a Final Document, and broke up without any resolutions, which was the worst possible result.

You can't consider the issue of Iran's suspected nuclear weapon development without also considering the fear such weapons held by Israel are causing for Iran. The fact is, America looks the other way when it comes to Israel's nuclear weapons. America is employing a double standard, telling Iran that it can't continue suspected weapon development while remaining silent about Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. America's inconsistent policies for world peace in its responses to war in the Middle East or terrorism by Islamic extremists show up symbolically in the very serious matter of suspected nuclear weapon development. There is antipathy toward America's peace policies. Without also resolving these issues, unilaterally saying no to Iran is not very persuasive.

As to nuclear weapons already being kept, there must be inspections under the NPT to verify that these are safely under control and accounted for until there's an agreement that results in their elimination.

People of religion are primarily total pacifists, for whom possession of military power is in itself not desirable. At one time, in rural Japan, villagers lived with a sense of security, trusting all the people in their village as neighbors, and any house could be left unlocked. In the same way, if the world was one where, if anyone had trouble, others would come to help, then there would be no need for military force. In reality, there are places where that was possible some time ago, and there are such regions even now, so we must set our goals high. The question, however, is how to close the gap.

For today's Buddhists, what should the attitude be toward the elimination of nuclear weapons?

Looking back on history, we see that the developed countries have come to routinely guarantee freedom and equality. In the field of human rights, for example, the right to vote, which was restricted in the past, has become available to everyone. History is definitely moving in the right direction, toward the ideal.

Religion is not all contemplation and pondering; it is being asked to expound upon, now, the realities of the future. There are things that cannot be completed in our lifetime alone, of course. It's important to build up, step by step, what will become a reality in the future. I think that is what it means to live in reality rather than the ideal world. Religions teach the existence of heaven and life after death, but that does not mean it's all right for people of religion to do nothing; we have to think of doing things that move the present world closer to the Pure Land.

The Lotus Sutra contains the words "the purifying of the buddha-lands, and the perfecting of all living beings." I think the "buddha-lands" are a world in which all living things can accomplish their purpose of living and their existence. People of religion should pray for living things to accomplish, if only a little, the purpose of living their finite lives, but at the same time they must also endeavor to change reality for that purpose.

At present, Religions for Peace is rolling out a global petition drive for the elimination of nuclear weapons, called the

Arms Down! campaign. It is also, through its peace activities, telling the world of a new approach to security called Shared Security. There is a need, from now forward, for further cooperation, such as building up religious leagues dedicated to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Since its founding forty years ago, Religions for Peace has built a track record of religious dialogue, but it has yet to set up a system for people of religion to quickly gather on nuclear issues. I think it is possible, since there is the example of the gathering in New York after the 9/11 attacks.

Buddhism teaches that the three poisons are greed, anger and ignorance. "Ignorance" refers to a state in which a lack of wisdom causes trouble. In other words, it is essential to know other viewpoints and to know the world, and by knowing these you can see things through others' eyes, and then there can be dialogue. That's the principle, the general rule, of religious dialogue. Knowing other viewpoints and showing respect—aren't those the first steps toward peace?

It's important, if one is to eliminate nuclear weapons, to first know how they can be brought under control. To do that, although controlling the number of nuclear weapons is important, the teaching of the three poisons shows that it is also important to control our hearts and minds, and ultimately, of course, it is important that we influence people to join us in such efforts. The process of getting there, of putting together a movement to eliminate nuclear weapons that causes the people of the world to listen and say, "Oh, *that's* why it's not good to have nuclear weapons"—that is where the wisdom of the people of religion is really needed. □

On September 8, 2009, Ven. Sugitani, an executive advisor to the Tendai Buddhist denomination, leads a Buddhist prayer in the Old Town in Cracow, Poland, during one of the annual International Meetings—People and Religions, organized by the Community of Sant'Egidio. Representatives of various religious communities gathered in different places in the Old Town to pray for world peace.

Nuclear Weapons Must Not Exist in This World

Testimony of a Doctor Who Treated Atomic Bomb Victims

by Shuntaro Hida

On July 14, 2009, the Peace Research Institute of the Japanese Committee of the World Conference of Religions for Peace invited to its study session Dr. Shuntaro Hida, former director of the Hibakusha Counseling Center of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations. Born in 1917, Dr. Hida, who was himself irradiated by the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, has, over a period of more than sixty years, treated six thousand patients suffering from illnesses resulting from atomic bomb radiation. Dr. Hida spoke from his experience with acute radiation syndrome and internal exposure caused by the atomic bomb. The following is a portion of his talk.

I have seen with a doctor's eyes how radiation from an atomic bomb kills humans. Yet modern medicine has yet to be able to prove a causal relationship between the sickness suffered by atomic bomb victims and the radiation from the atomic bomb. So the side that dropped the bomb continues to have nuclear weapons, saying falsely that the effects of radiation are trivial. What I want to do in my talk today is to connect the issues of today to the horror that I have seen with my own eyes of humans dying as a result of radiation, and to the fact that we cannot allow nuclear weapons to exist in the world.

Death Caused by Acute Radiation Syndrome

In 1944, at the age of twenty-eight, I was assigned as an army medical officer to Hiroshima Military Hospital. On the morning of August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, annihilating the city. My life was spared that day because I happened to be making a house call in a village outside the city to see the child of a farming family. Even though it was six kilometers (just under four miles) away from ground zero, the roof of the farmhouse was blown off, the house was demolished, and inside the house I too was blown about. Because of my duties as a military medical officer, after making sure the farm family was safe, I sped back on my bicycle toward the city and the hospital. On the way, however, I encountered an endless line of horribly burned people fleeing the Hiroshima area. I gave up the idea of returning to the hospital and went back to the village I had just left, where, together with other medical officers, nurses, and combat medics, I set about treating the people who were fleeing Hiroshima.

The atomic bomb had burned many people over their entire bodies, and the dead hardly looked human. But in

among the people who had died there were also many who had less severe burns and who looked like they could possibly be saved. Some of these, however, suddenly ran temperatures of 39–40°C (102–104°F). Not only did they have fevers, but they were also bleeding from their noses, mouths, and the corners of their eyes. I thought they might be suffering from colds, which would have made their tonsils inflamed and deep red in color, but when I looked down their throats to inspect their tonsils, there was such a stench I couldn't keep my face in front of them. It was the putrid smell of death, which can happen when a part of the body rots while the rest is still living. The insides of their mouths were pitch black, meaning necrosis had set in. Eventually violet-colored flecks appeared on the unburned, clear parts of their skin, and finally all their hair fell out. No matter how healthy they

Dr. Shuntaro Hida explains radiation poisoning caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, at a study session of the Peace Research Institute of Religions for Peace Japan.

The bombed-out city of Hiroshima seen from the roof of the surviving police station. Wooden structures were destroyed by the blast of the bomb and totally consumed in the following conflagration. Photographed on August 10, 1945.

had been, the people who exhibited these symptoms died in two or three hours. This is what I saw of people dying from acute illness due to radiation.

Internal Exposure That Continues to Destroy Cells

While I was going about my work, a soldier who was behind me grabbed my clothing and pulled at me, saying "Medical Officer, sir, I wasn't exposed to the [bomb's] flash." He was with a unit stationed far from Hiroshima, but on the evening of the sixth the commanding officer of his unit learned of the terrible state of affairs in Hiroshima and brought all the soldiers to Hiroshima, where they presumably helped in relieving the still-burning city. At any rate, this soldier had worked for two days without anything to drink or eat, and on the morning of the third day he collapsed from exhaustion. His comrades had carried him to the village medical clinic and left him in the midst of the bomb victims lying on the floor. In other words, although he had not been directly irradiated by the atomic bomb, he was in the midst of those who had been; he had been watching them die one after another. He had watched as their skin got purple spots, their hair fell out, and they finally vomited blood or blood came out of their rectums and they all died. Purple spots then started to appear on his own skin and, terrified, he came to where I was standing.

I put him off, telling him that since he hadn't been exposed to the bomb he would get better if he stayed where he was and rested. About four or five days later, I remembered about him and went to check on his condition, only to find that he had died. Blood had come out of him in the same way, his hair had fallen out, and he had died with the same symptoms as the others. At the time I didn't understand how a person who had not been exposed to the bomb could later exhibit

the same symptoms as those who had been in Hiroshima. At the time, nobody knew the reason.

I didn't become convinced of the reason until thirty years later, in 1976, when I went to the United Nations as a member of a national delegation bringing attention to the realities of radiation poisoning. In the United States at that time, there were many U.S. soldiers who had been exposed to radiation from nuclear tests, and as with the survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, many were suffering, without doctors' being able to specify an illness for them. There were conscientious doctors in America who had examined them with dedication, and upon talking with them I first learned of the reality of internal exposure, where radiation entering the body could cause illness.

At the very instant the bomb exploded, radioactive elements were emitted on a huge scale simultaneously with the explosion, passing from the outside through people's bodies. At the same time, many of the things on the ground surface became radioactive and began to emit radiation. This is called "induced radiation," and many people got radiation poisoning in this way, even though they had not been there at the time of the explosion.

Furthermore, it was poisoning not just from external radiation but also from radioactive elements scattered by the explosion, contaminating the dust, soil, water, and the like and then entering people's bodies when they drank and ate. These radioactive substances entering the body will continue to emit radiation without depleting, destroying a person's cells bit by bit over a long period of time. This is called "internal exposure."

There are at Nagasaki University the internal organs of bomb victims. In order to verify that plutonium from the time still remained in the organs, researchers from Nagasaki

Photo by Hajime Miyatake / The Asahi Shimbun



A relief worker tends a young victim of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The child is about to be taken to a treatment facility. Photographed on August 10, 1945.

Photo: courtesy of Tokuko Kikuchi



This girl was at home two kilometers from the hypocenter when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. She has lost her hair as an aftereffect of radiation poisoning. Photographed by Shunkichi Kikuchi on October 6, 1945.

University carried out tests, taking photographs of alpha rays and beta rays; they were successful with their photography last year [2008]. And this year they were able to verify that the radioactive substance that remains in the organs is plutonium from the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki. In other words, the plutonium from the atomic bomb is still in the internal organs of people who were killed by that bomb sixty years ago, and it is still undergoing fission.

Taking a Stand against Nuclear Weapons

Radiation will slowly turn a healthy person into a sick one. Humankind should not be permitted to be careless about radiation until it is proven that one can become ill as a result of radiation, and until there is a method of treating that illness. Otherwise, the human race will perish from the radiation discharged by nuclear power generating plants, which appear to be on the increase.



A boy with serious burns to his face and arms is treated at the Red Cross Hospital in Hiroshima on August 10.

We have been spending large sums of money on such dangerous things. Needless to say, not a single nuclear weapon must be allowed to remain. They are instruments of murder. Nor should any new ones be built; they absolutely should not be used. That is what I believe.

Countries that lack power want to have nuclear weapons so they can confront the great powers. Moreover, there are also many people who think that they can sell nuclear weapons and make a profit. These are extremely dangerous circumstances. The situation will not change simply by thinking nonchalantly that it would be better if there were no nuclear weapons. It is most important for each of us, one by one and with true conviction, to stand in solidarity with the thinking that we must sever our connection with something that can damage many generations to come.

Finally, the majority of the world apparently now thinks that there should be no nuclear weapons. Whether or not nuclear weapons will actually be eliminated will depend on your own efforts from this time onward. Please tell your children and grandchildren to stand up against nuclear weapons. □

Photo by Hajime Miyatake / The Asahi Shimbun

The Development of Rissho Kosei-kai's Nuclear Disarmament Activities

by Katsuji Suzuki

Rissho Kosei-kai's unceasing efforts since 1970 at UN and interreligious conferences to promote a vision of a world free of nuclear weapons will culminate this year.

I would like to look back on the course taken by religious people around the world who have cooperated in creating movements for peace and disarmament, including campaigns for the abolition of nuclear weapons. I will also reflect on the wishes of Rev. Nikkyo Niwano, founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, which are the basis of the organization's campaigns to abolish nuclear weapons.

From his childhood on, Founder Niwano was kind to people, and after he became an adolescent he increasingly felt the greatest joy in alleviating people's suffering and pain. He came to know the Buddhist Dharma as revealed in the Lotus Sutra, the essence of Shakyamuni's sermons. Founder Niwano decided to dedicate his life to the bodhisattva practices of helping to free people from suffering and building world peace in the light of the Lotus Sutra. He said, "The Dharma revealed in the Lotus Sutra is applicable to all the myriad forms and phenomena in the universe, and not one thing is excluded from it. I made up my mind clearly when I discovered the truth of this teaching that can save all the vastness of individuals, societies, and nations."

Founder Niwano observed that all people of faith throughout history who prayed for human salvation united the peoples and races among which they arose. With his understanding of the Lotus Sutra, he realized that since all people

of religion aim for human salvation and world peace, he should dedicate himself to interreligious cooperation. Furthermore, he fundamentally believed that the salvation of a society, a nation, and the world does not stop at saving individuals. Rather, the effective and ongoing salvation of individuals requires religious groups, who are the stakeholders of their society, and nation and the international community, to cooperate with leaders in many other fields, such as politics, economics, science, and technology.

Now I would like to trace the path to disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons promoted by Founder Niwano, rooted in his understanding of religion and of the Lotus Sutra.

Religious Cooperation Promoting the Spirit of Nonviolence

Although Founder Niwano's work for peace began officially at the First World Assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, in Kyoto in 1970, it actually began in 1963 when he visited Europe and the United States as subleader of the Peace Delegation of Religious Leaders for Banning Nuclear Weapons, which demanded a comprehensive, unconditional ban on all nuclear testing.

In January 1968, the International Inter-Religious Symposium on Peace was held in New Delhi to honor the centenary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth, a year before the actual centenary in 1969. The delegation of American religious leaders who participated in that symposium stopped in Japan on their way home to meet with Japanese religious leaders at the Japanese-American Inter-Religious Consultation on Peace in Kyoto. At this meeting, the Americans reported on the symposium's results, and they all discussed a nonviolent approach to peace. It was the concerted will of the Japanese and American people of religion at this meeting in Kyoto to bring peace to the world that marked the beginning of real preparations for an international conference to promote an organization for interreligious cooperation—the World Conference of Religions for Peace.

Founder Niwano said later of his belief in nonviolence, "I

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believe that in this nuclear age it is the mission of people of religion to devote their lives to helping people everywhere realize that nonviolence is the saving 'force' of humankind."

Religions for Peace Working in Partnership with the United Nations

Disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons were first proposed at the First World Assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, in Kyoto in 1970. The First World Assembly convened against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, which had turned into a quagmire. The world's men and women of faith were calling for an early end to it. The world was in the midst of the bitter confrontations of the Cold War. With both sides in a ruthless arms race and the world desperately seeking a solution to the poverty caused by the soaring costs of the military, the Cold War was becoming a heavy and overpowering drag on social development. People of faith around the world saw an urgent need for arms control and drastic reduction. Religions for Peace proceeded to establish its International Secretariat in front of the UN Headquarters in New York. It shared with the United Nations a vision of the world moving toward peace, and it had strongly recognized from the start the importance of a partnership with the United Nations in tackling global impediments to peace.

The reason that Religions for Peace, a private organization representing the world's people of religion, had a voice at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament (SSOD), organized by the member nations of the United Nations, is that Religions for Peace was a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that could contribute on the strength of its heightened visibility sufficiently so as to make it a partner with the United Nations in initiatives regarding the problems of world peace.

Founder Niwano saw that the way to approach governments around the world to promote disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons was through a UN NGO reflecting the voices of people around the world. It was Religions for Peace's most favorable advantage that its first secretary-general, Dr. Homer A. Jack, was an expert on disarmament. Following his appointment as secretary-general of Religions for Peace, Dr. Jack served as an NGO representative of Religions for Peace to the United Nations and observed the meetings of the UN General Assembly's First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) and of the Conference on Disarmament at the UN headquarters in Geneva, enabling him to accurately follow trends in world disarmament, mainly through the United Nations.

Proposals to UN Assemblies

There have been three Special Sessions on Disarmament—in 1978, 1982, and 1988—and Founder Niwano spoke at each as an NGO representative: at SSOD I as Religions for Peace's honorary chairman, at SSOD II as president of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), and at SSOD III as president of Risho Kosei-kai.

Founder Niwano, as one of the speakers representing twenty-six NGOs and six research institutions, made a seven-point proposal, especially calling upon American president Jimmy Carter and Soviet general secretary Leonid Brezhnev, as the leaders of the superpowers engaged in the Cold War, to "take major risks for peace and disarmament instead of taking risks with arms." As a religious leader, he called for an exploration of the religious and spiritual dimensions of world disarmament involving rather highly complex and technical issues. The most important outcome of SSOD I was the adoption of a Final Document that awakened the interest

Left: Members of the Peace Delegation of Religious Leaders for Banning Nuclear Weapons before their departure on September 14, 1963. Right: The Japanese-American Inter-Religious Consultation on Peace held in the Kyoto International Conference Center on January 22, 1968.

in implementing the SSOD I Final Document's action plan. Although the Final Document's stipulation for general and complete disarmament had been earth shattering in light of the history of UN initiatives for disarmament, those initiatives had brought no progress worth mentioning in diminishing the tension of the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union to deploy medium-range missiles, in which neither government ruled out the use of nuclear weapons.

That was the situation as SSOD II convened. Dr. Homer Jack addressed the session as a representative of Religions for Peace, and Founder Niwano on behalf of the IARF. When Founder Niwano took the rostrum, he said he was speaking "as a Buddhist from Japan, the only nation ever to suffer atomic bomb attack." He declared, "The fate of humankind must be determined, not by the governmental representatives of a handful of nation states, but by the grass-roots wishes of the broadest possible united segment of humankind." He also reported that Rissho Kosei-kai and Shinshuren (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan) had started a petition drive demanding disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons, collecting 37 million signatures in two short months.

To ease tensions and restrain the arms race, it was crucial to arouse public opinion, including that of people of religion. To this end, shortly after SSOD II opened, a World Disarmament Campaign was launched. As Founder Niwano was bringing his address to a close, he announced that he was taking to heart the need to arouse public opinion in favor of the abolition of nuclear weapons, and that Rissho Kosei-kai would donate \$1 million toward the various activities of the World Disarmament Campaign in 1982 and 1983.

At the time of SSOD II, Rissho Kosei-kai sent a forty-two-

Founder Nikkyo Niwano speaks as honorary chairman of Religions for Peace at the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament at UN Headquarters in New York in June 1982.

of governments and the general public of all countries, on a global scale, in the issues of disarmament and that clearly specified the goals of general and complete disarmament.

Four years later, in 1982, the Second Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD II) was convened to gauge the progress

The First World Assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace in 1970, where disarmament was high on the agenda.

member Peace Mission to New York. During their seven-day stay, beginning June 22, the group participated in various events near UN Headquarters for the promotion of disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons. They attended as NGO observers at an NGO presentation session of SSOD II and listened to Founder Niwano's oral statement. Their other activities included dialogues with U.S. and Soviet UN representatives. Rev. Kinjiro Niwano, the head of the Peace Mission and chairman of the Rishsho Kosei-kai Promotion Committee for Disarmament and the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, submitted a portion of the 37 million signatures collected by Rishsho Kosei-kai and Shinshuren to UN secretary-general Javier Pérez de Cuéllar during a ceremony on the terrace outside the headquarters building.

SSOD III convened in 1988. It was addressed by representatives of eighty-seven international NGOs. As president of Rishsho Kosei-kai, Founder Niwano spoke of the urgency of trust-building measures between nations as an indispensable requisite for promoting disarmament. He argued that to create an environment for pragmatic and technical advances in disarmament and an advancement of so-called "outward peace," we must vigorously promote dialogue and cooperation that can transform hatred and hostility into trust and friendship.

Three SSOD III subcommittees evaluated implementation of the SSOD I and SSOD II action plans and discussed future disarmament plans and the United Nations' role for disarmament. The issues discussed included a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, naval disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in space, and the relationship between disarmament and development. The subcommittees deadlocked on these issues, however, and SSOD III issued no Final Document. However, the results of the World Disarmament Campaign initiated by SSOD II were appreciated, and it was agreed that the campaign should go forward with increased strength. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that, concurrently with SSOD III, Founder Niwano witnessed the signing ceremony that established the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD). The ceremony was held in the office of Mr. Yasushi Akashi, then the UN undersecretary-general for disarmament affairs.

In 1989 the international community witnessed the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and while it was expecting a "peace dividend" with the end of the Cold War, the world was plunged into more than ten years of civil war in the former Yugoslavia. Then the international reaction to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 led to the Gulf War, resulting in a new state of confusion for world security. One measure taken to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the face of such an international environment was the Amendment Conference at UN Headquarters in New York in January 1991 to convert the standing Partial Test Ban Treaty to a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

President Nichiko Niwano, who inherited Founder Niwano's fervent desire for world peace, declared in his

These are some of the 37 million signatures collected in 1982 by Rishsho Kosei-kai and Shinshuren to a petition for disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Members of the Peace Mission organized by Rishsho Kosei-kai in June 1982 on the occasion of SSOD II appeal in a street of New York for disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Members of the Peace Mission, together with other NGO members, heard speeches by U.S. and Soviet representatives to the United Nations at the Church Center, across from UN Headquarters.

Founder Niwano witnesses the signing ceremony establishing the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which took place concurrently with SSOD III, on June 8, 1988.

address to the Amendment Conference that international trust was indispensable for disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons, and that to advance the disarmament campaign in the Asia-Pacific region, in particular, Rissho Kosei-kai would continue the overall support it had given the UNRCPD since SSOD III, so that UNRCPD could develop a campaign of maximum effectiveness.

Unending Trust in Young People's Initiatives

As we have seen, on three occasions Founder Niwano called on the statesmen of the world for a world without nuclear weapons, and President Niwano addressed the Amendment Conference. Now, in 2010, the baton to free the world of nuclear weapons has been passed to the world's religious youth, who are at this moment dynamically conducting a drive to gather 50 million signatures in the Arms Down! Campaign for Shared Security.

Two thousand ten is a make-or-break year in which, as Mr. Obama has spelled out, we can either open the path that makes possible humankind's heartfelt desire to create a world without nuclear weapons or resign ourselves to a nightmare that foretells the end of humankind. In May there will be a Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The important decision as to whether we will actually move in the direction of eliminating nuclear weapons is riding on this conference. Our 50-million-strong signature-gathering drive for Arms Down! will have a definite impact, to climax with the 2020 Vision Campaign promoted by Mayors for Peace, led by the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Its goal is to free the world of nuclear weapons by 2020 (by ratification of a nuclear weapons ban treaty as well as actual abolition). At the NPT Review Conference, Mayors for Peace will plead for adoption of the 2020 Vision Campaign.

In his book *Some Thoughts on Peace*, Founder Niwano tells how he expected the abolishing of nuclear weapons to come about. He wrote that some people "are already despairing, mourning the impossibility of abolishing nuclear weapons in the world as it is today. However, as the desire grows more

urgent among people, one by one others will be added to their number, and step by step, efforts will be made to achieve this dream. It is in this way that the miracle will occur."

Founder Niwano always had an unwavering faith in the affirmative activism of young people, feeling that it would be through them that a new era would dawn. I would like to close with President Nichiko Niwano's remarks about the youth who are exerting their efforts for the Arms Down! signature-gathering campaign, the youth who are working to usher in a new age of peace:

"There is no doubt that concentrating the brilliance of the lives" of the world's youth "will itself bear much fruit. Uncovers the goodwill and desire for peace that resides in the hearts of all people is a true activity for religious people I would like to see." □

Rev. Nichiko Niwano addresses the UN Amendment Conference for Partial Test Ban Treaty at UN Headquarters in New York in January 1991.

Aiming for a World without War

by Nikkyo Niwano

This essay is part of a continuing series of translations from a volume of inspirational writings by the founder of Rissho Kosei-kai. DHARMA WORLD will continue to publish these essays because of their lasting value as guidance for the practice of one's daily faith.

Looking back on human history, it is no exaggeration to say that, by and large, it is a history of war. There are even those who say ironically that peace is merely the interim between wars, a time that humankind spends preparing for the next war. It is widely understood, of course, that Buddhism teaches a doctrine of peace, as does Christianity, which is reflected in such Bible verses as "Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children!" (Matt. 5:9). Both the Buddha and Jesus aspired to building peace on earth and preached that we could achieve this through compassion and love. Despite their best efforts, however, human conflict has doggedly persisted, so it is not surprising that we sometimes have feelings of desperation. The Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), for example, resolutely held out hope for the achievement of peace by saying: "Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man."

There is nothing we can do to thwart the vast forces of nature, but war is by no stretch of the imagination an act of nature. If we refer to the research of scholars who have scrutinized the origins of every war of the modern era, we will see that not a single war in that period began by chance or with-

out express intent. War, in other words, is created by human beings and by human beings alone, and if that is the case, it should also be within human power to prevent it. It is from deep within people's hearts that the causes of wars arise, so there is no other way for us to end them than to begin to cultivate people's hearts. This may seem to be time-consuming, but it is the shortest road to peace.

People of religion have been continuing to actively address the numerous impediments to peace in the world. We have been identifying problems in various parts of the world, and on resolving what seem to be the best ways to deal with them, we have urged the people in authority to take the necessary action. When I was in New York in 1971, word reached me that the U.S. government was planning to carry out underground testing of a nuclear weapon in Alaska. Without hesitation I together with other members of the World Conference of Religions for Peace drafted a resolution in the name of the organization and sent it to then-president Richard Nixon. Regrettably, the United States went ahead with the test, but that did not mean our spirits were dampened or that we became any less confident about the possibility of eventually achieving lasting peace. If we simply give up, the situation will only become worse. It is becoming increasingly clear that we must seek cooperation from people of the world's other religions to speak out in unison so that the voice of reason may be heard.

At the First World Assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace in Kyoto in 1970, we decided on "creating a world without arms" as one of our themes. I cannot imagine that there is anybody who would object to living in such a world, but achieving it is the problem, and when events like a renewed start to violence between India and Pakistan occur, it is easy to lose hope that such a difficult goal can ever be reached. That is all the more reason for us to stay strong in our determination and consider seriously how we can help to achieve a disarmed world. The more we continue to study the issue, the wider the discussions about it will spread, and even

Nikkyo Niwano, the founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, was an honorary president of the World Conference of Religions for Peace and was honorary chairman of Shinshuren (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan) at the time of his death in October 1999.

if we cannot solve the problem overnight, slowly but surely the emphasis on increased armaments will lose sway until one day the world will wake up to the fact that disarmament has been generally embraced as a real priority.

So from my point of view, people of religion should not dwell on a weak goal like merely weapons reduction but rather should go all the way and unreservedly aspire toward a world completely free of armaments. Even if such a goal is not immediately achievable, we must continue to advocate it passionately, and gradually short-sighted notions, such as that foreign policy and hope for economic development will lose footing without military backing, will surely begin to diminish.

World history is one of conflict, but if we want to ensure that the history of the future is one without wars, it is extremely important that each and every one of us makes a sustained effort to unburden ourselves of our reliance on armaments and begins to trust one another. It is simply not good enough to commit ourselves for just ten or twenty years, or focus solely on our immediate interests.

All things in the world are sustained by the life force of the Buddha and live dependent on everything else; this is a situation that has never changed. When we view the reality of things from this viewpoint, we cannot but realize "all religions spring from the same source" and "many in body, but one in spirit."

The many people and circumstances of this world appear to be innumerable and completely diverse, but if we take a moment to focus on the fundamental commonalities among them, we find that they are basically similar in many ways. When we learn to recognize this, everywhere we look will rouse within us spontaneous feelings of unity and mutuality. That is the meaning of friendship. That is the true meaning of compassion.

On the other hand, if we choose to focus only on the superficial differences that distinguish one thing from another, then no two things in this world can ever possibly be in harmony. As soon as we begin to dwell on the differences among people or the divisions among things, then feelings of opposition and estrangement will naturally follow. Without so much realizing it, we start to constantly remind ourselves that so-and-so comes from somewhere else, or that person is from an entirely different background.

In that way differences in our thinking and perspective can lead to starkly contrasting sentiments. While what we are looking at remains the same, we can get from it a feeling of friendship or, equally, of opposition, depending on how we acknowledge it. Essentially, this is a question of the heart: Do we approach one another in friendship or strictly define ourselves in a discriminating way in terms of what we are not?

Friendship, we must understand, lies at the heart of successful human relations and forms the basis of lasting peace. Real friendship works from the depths of our hearts to help us try to understand each other regardless of superficial ten-

Founder Nikkyo Niwano and other executive committee members of the World Conference of Religions for Peace leave UN Headquarters in New York on November 4, 1971, after a meeting with Mr. Adam Malik, president of the UN General Assembly, in which UN and religious leaders pledged to contribute to world peace.

sion-raising differences. It teaches us that there is always an opportunity to cooperate and arrive at a compromise.

The preliminary meeting of the World Conference of Religions for Peace in December 1969 brimmed with such a spirit, and it felt wonderful. Yes, there were differences in opinion and the occasional fierce contestation, but laughter followed all disputes without fail and we invariably reached conclusions in a warm and genial atmosphere. That is how things should be. It happened then because we had gathered in friendship right from the start. This was only natural, since shared feelings had brought us together so that we were all able to concentrate on the issue of peace.

How magnificent life would be if things were always like this. The day the fields of politics, foreign affairs, international trade, labor, and the many other instances of human relationships become as genial and lively as these were, we will know that human civilization has made true progress, that all peoples can live in peaceful relationships, and that the Land of Tranquil Light has at last become manifest. □

Let Us Become Good Friends in the Dharma

by Nichiko Niwano

Rissho Kosei-kai's president explains how the Sangha in Buddhism helps individual believers grasp the teachings and become spiritually self-reliant.

Last year, in October, exactly ten years had gone by since the founder's passing into nirvana. At that time, facing the reality of his entering nirvana, I suppose that many members might have been worried about the future of Rissho Kosei-kai. But now, ten years later, the Dharma continues to make progress, and many people have been guided to true happiness.

Due to the efforts of all members of the Sangha, we have today's achievements—I sincerely feel this to be true.

The Buddha taught us: "Our having good friends and being with them is itself the entire Holy Path." "Good friends" here means members of the Sangha who have the same sense of values regarding the Buddhist teachings and who also strive for the same kind of self-improvement. And "Holy Path" means the path of Buddhism. The Buddha taught us how important it is to meet with good friends—in a Sangha—when we walk on the Buddha Way, so that we can study hard by encouraging each other.

"Good friends" does not mean simply people of strong faith. Even people who have just joined Rissho Kosei-kai share their daily worries, their feelings, or what they have learned in *hoza* sessions or through their speeches of religious affirmation, and they can have an immeasurable effect on those around them. "That reminds me of something I have faced" and "yes, that's a good way to deal with that" are examples of such reactions. Through listening to the words of others,

people can take an objective look at themselves, and after some self-examination, they can have a change of heart.

In this manner, the workings of the Sangha flow both ways. It can be said that essentially all of us are "good friends." Through studying the Buddha's teachings and grasping their meaning, we can help to liberate one another, which is what good friends do.

Also, good friends are those who share the same beliefs and walk together with us while each of us is striving to "Make yourself a light, make the Dharma a light."

Immediately before entering nirvana, Shakyamuni left that short saying behind for his disciples. "Do not depend upon me, but live as though you were your own light, as though the Dharma were your light"; these were his last words. Expressing this differently, it can be said that Shakyamuni taught us the importance of individually grasping the meaning of the Buddhist teachings, becoming self-reliant believers, and living with a true purpose.

In order to pass our days with worries or suffering resolved, with happiness and enjoyment without attachment, a group of good friends, a Sangha, is essential. Ordinarily, it is important to receive advice from those above us. But in the end the Buddha's teachings must be grasped and practiced by us ourselves. We must all strive to make the self our light, make the Dharma our light, and we must also invite those we meet to do the same. That is the act of a true good friend.

Furthermore, the characteristic of good friends is that they strive to be always cheerful, warm, and gentle.

Contemporary life is often compared to a rat race. Businesses strive to produce ever-increasing profits, and exert great efforts not to be outdone by their competitors. In one sense, this cannot be helped, but when one's life goal is defined by numerical figures, and people come to be valued by how well they achieve them, then an atmosphere arises in which natural feelings can be stifled.

At the same time, the world of religion can be said to be one in which there is no reason for comparison with others or for frantic competition. Every individual is recognized to have an absolute value, and the faithful join their hands in prayer and pay reverence to one another. I want to encourage such a true religious atmosphere, one with cheerful, warm,

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and gentle good friends in which anyone can rest both body and spirit. Based on the importance of such good friends in a Sangha, I would like to offer the following religious objectives for this year.

In 2010, continuing from last year, we would like to go on with the installation of an image of the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni and the Dharma titles of the founder and cofounder at every member's home altar, as the fundamental basics of the practice of faith in Rissho Kosei-kai.

Through this movement, we are undertaking the task of fostering members (good friends) who are aware of Buddhism's essential path to liberation and who practice that awareness.

The founder and cofounder taught us that Shakyamuni's true spirit exists in the essence of the wisdom and compassion described in the Lotus Sutra.

Looking ahead to our coming centennial in 2038, let us move forward together on the path of liberating others as well as ourselves through wisdom and compassion while creating a Sangha that is a group firmly based on the fundamental truths of Buddhism.

Having an image of the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni at each member's home altar and praying before it is a basic Buddhist practice for us. But the installation of such an image is not our final goal. Our goal is that each individual will offer reverence before the image, and take refuge in the Buddha. In doing so, all of us will gradually become cheerful, warm, and gentle people. This can be accomplished through basing all our action on the fundamental truths of Buddhism. We have already learned that all human beings have the innate ability to do this.

The birth verse of the Buddha reads: "Above heaven, below heaven, I alone am the only precious one." I interpret this to mean that throughout the whole world, there is not one person who is worthless. All are precious; or more briefly, that throughout the world, all beings are precious.

In one of the Buddhist sutras, it is taught that Shakyamuni's state of mind when he achieved enlightenment was: Wonderful! Wonderful! All living beings possess the wisdom and the virtuous sign of the Tathagata (the highest epithet of a buddha), but they do not realize this because of their attachment to desires and illusions.

"Wonderful" here means "What a wonderful thing." As part of their lives, all living beings are equipped with the wisdom and various attributes and compassion of the Tathagatas. Shakyamuni says, however, that we do not become aware of the treasures we have right in our hearts because we all have such earthly desires as defilements and attachments, in other words, greed, anger, and ignorance.

All human beings are precious; all of us unenlightened ones possess the same wisdom and compassion as the Tathagata. From these words, we can gain great inspiration.

Likewise, there is a saying in the Dhammapada: "Difficult is it to be born as a human being; difficult is the existence of mortals."* This also allows us to awaken the gratefulness

within ourselves and to realize how wondrous, how precious our lives are. This is an important discovery that can help to motivate us, and we can only rejoice upon making it.

We should engrave these words of the Buddha within our hearts and not concentrate on our shortcomings and dissatisfactions, but instead express gratitude and realize the preciousness of the many blessings already bestowed upon us. It is important to recognize that we should be thankful even for those things we consider disadvantageous. Then, as in the saying "Benefit for Oneself and Benefit for Others as One," we will realize the true joy of all human beings in learning that we as well as others can be liberated. This is the true meaning of liberation through Buddhism.

We often learn this way of looking at things in places like Dharma Centers. But when we return to our homes and interact with our families, many of us tend to revert to our old selves and old habits. It is especially for this reason that it is necessary to study the Dharma. When we can correctly grasp the meaning of the Buddha's teachings, we can begin to apply what we have learned in our daily lives, and can continue to do this over and over. Eventually, it comes about that it is in our everyday lives that we study the Dharma. We come to live mindfully in a way such that in every waking hour of the day, every single day of the year, at every moment, we are in the practical position of studying the Dharma.

Despite the ten years that have passed since the founder entered nirvana, in my mind's eye I still see his smiling face. Whatever problem he may have faced, the founder never complained, never groaned in anguish, never became despondent, never attacked others, and never tried to escape the problem or to blame others, but always looked at everything with the same serene smile, which is how he lived his entire life. As members of Rissho Kosei-kai, emulating the founder's attitude should be one of our important goals, being cheerful, warm, and gentle people, with the radiance of the sun. That should be a guidepost for living for all of us.

Rissho Kosei-kai must strive to be an organization in which all members, chapters, Dharma Centers, and the organization itself can become a great harmonious Sangha, all with the same goal within our hearts.

The installation of an image of the Eternal Buddha and the Dharma titles of the founder and cofounder at every member's home altar and the creation of a religious group or Sangha based on the true characteristics of Buddhism are means that will lead us toward the attainment of true happiness. As we look ahead to our centennial, let us work together to achieve these aims, without hurrying, without resting, and with a spirit of joy.

Let us realize the importance of the people and things that are before our eyes right now, and walk forward on the path of liberating ourselves and others with wisdom and compassion, one step at a time with steady progress. □

* *Dhammapada: Wisdom of the Buddha*, trans. Harischandra Kaviratna (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1989), 73.

The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law

Chapter 16

Revelation of the [Eternal] Life of the Tathagata

(2)

This is the 101st installment of a detailed commentary on the Threefold Lotus Sutra by the founder of Rissho Kosei-kai, Rev. Nikkyo Niwano.

TEXT Thereupon the Buddha addressed all those bodhisattva-mahasattvas: "Good sons! Now I must clearly announce and declare to you. Suppose you take as atomized all those worlds where an atom has been deposited or where it has not been deposited, and [count] an atom as a kalpa, [the time] since I became Buddha still surpasses these by hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of nayutas of asamkhyeya kalpas.

COMMENTARY The "measureless and boundless" worlds spoken of up to this point have referred to infinite space. In actuality, this has been a prerequisite for speaking about infinite time.

It is already beyond comprehension to imagine these worlds as atoms and then to imagine those atoms deposited one at a time such great distances apart. Now one is to take all the worlds where atoms have been deposited and the hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of nayutas of asamkhyeya worlds where atoms have not been deposited and atomize them. These numbers together equal something so immense that it can only be called absolute.

The Buddha is not merely preaching by means of a metaphor that defies imagination. It is in order to discuss *absoluteness* and *infinity* that he is taking such trouble. The words *absoluteness* and *infinity* are hard for ordinary minds to grasp. That is why he makes use of relative, finite criteria that the mind can deal with, such as this world and stars, to elicit some idea of just what is meant by absoluteness and infinity.

Having done this, he calls on the bodhisattva-mahasattvas to consider this infinite number in terms of time. Each of this already incalculable number of atoms is to be taken as one kalpa. He says that the time that has passed since he became a buddha surpasses this number by hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of nayutas of asamkhyeya kalpas. In other words, he became a buddha in the infinite past.

If the Buddha has been in this world ever since the infinite past, then he is undoubtedly an absolute entity. It is most

important that a buddha be an absolute entity. As I have said earlier, that which we depend on must be an absolute entity. No matter how great a person may be, that person is a human being and is hence relative to us. One day that person will die. In other words, human beings are finite. Consequently, we cannot in a true sense make them our foundation. Likewise, however sophisticated and powerful the machines made by human beings may be, they will eventually break down or wear out and become unusable. Therefore, they too are relative to humankind and finite.

However enormous a sum of money one may have, someday it will be spent. However powerful a position one may attain, there will come a day when one will have to step down from that position. These, too, are finite and relative things. Even the gods who dwell in heaven are entities relative to human beings. Since they are relative entities, we may be forsaken. Therefore, as far as we are concerned they are finite. We cannot truly depend or rely on any of these.

The Buddha, however, exists inside us, outside us, everywhere; and because he has existed since the infinite past and will exist into the infinite future, even though we may seek to shut ourselves off from him we cannot. As a consequence, he is absolute. The Buddha is like oxygen. Oxygen surrounds us constantly. We cannot live a single moment without it. Still, there are people who know absolutely nothing about oxygen, or, if they do know about it, seldom think of it. Although we depend on it to stay alive, it is generally far from our minds. We are only occasionally grateful for it. When we are in a crowded room and there is not enough oxygen, for example, we open a window and appreciate the fresh air that flows in. Yet no matter how unconscious we are of it, oxygen is in plentiful supply within us and around us.

In the same way, because the fundamental Law, or Dharma, which cannot be abandoned even if we try and which sustains our lives, is the Buddha, who is absolute and infinite. Because he is absolute and infinite, we can cast our entire being, mental and physical, upon him in faith and have complete trust in him.

TEXT From that time forward I have constantly been preaching and teaching in this saha world, and also leading and benefiting all living beings in other places in hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of nayutas of asamkhyeya domains.

COMMENTARY This is another very important passage. The Buddha says, in effect, "I have appeared in the world as a human being, and although only forty-odd years have passed since I became a buddha, the Original Buddha that is my true being has been in this saha world since the infinite past." That is not all. He also says that the Tathagata Shakyamuni, the Eternal Original Buddha, has been instructing living beings everywhere in the universe.

As I have said previously, there is a world that each buddha is charged with instructing and leading. For example, the Tathagata Medicine Master (Bhaishajyaguru) is charged with the World of Pure Emerald Light in the east, the Tathagata Amitabha is charged with the Pure Land of Utmost Bliss in the west, and the Tathagata Shakyamuni is charged with this saha world. However, it is clear here that the Tathagata Shakyamuni, the Eternal Original Buddha, is not confined to this limited realm but is present in all domains in the ten directions, providing life to all beings.

Depending on conditions, the Eternal Original Buddha appears in different forms as the various buddhas of the reward-body and the manifest-body. Each and every buddha is a noble being, but here we learn that if we trace them back to their origin they are all united in the single Eternal Original Buddha.

Since the Eternal Original Buddha is the fundamental Law that sustains everything in the universe, he does not assume a specific fixed form. Invisible and intangible, he is Thusness, the supreme Truth itself. For this very reason, he can appear in any form. He can be symbolized in any form, too.

We ordinary people, even when we try to hold fast to the fundamental Law, find it difficult to call forth an image of what it might be like. Unless we envisage a specific form, our minds cannot focus on the fundamental Law. If our minds are unfocused, deep feeling does not well up within us. If we are left uninspired, the religious sentiment of devotion to the Law simply does not occur. This being the case, in what form are we to envision the fundamental Law, and how are we to symbolize it? I may seem to repeat myself, but it seems most natural for human beings to symbolize this in human form. This is how our minds can focus most clearly.

What kind of person are we to symbolize? We may picture an august person like a god or wizard, capable of performing miracles or displaying supernatural power. Or we may imagine a great mythical or legendary figure. But when all is said and done, the most natural figure, that which is the most compelling and makes the greatest impression on our hearts, is one who expounds the teachings to us. One sees the absolute profundity of such a figure. That is precisely why in Christianity one feels the abundant love of God through

the figure of Jesus Christ and why in Confucianism it is through veneration of Confucius that the Way (*tao*) that he expounded becomes etched on one's heart.

Accordingly, in Buddhism it is most natural and proper that we pay obeisance to the exaltedness of the fundamental Law (the Eternal Original Buddha) in the figure of Shakyamuni Buddha, who appeared in this world, expounded the profound teaching of the Buddha, and provided a living example of it.

In this chapter, Shakyamuni is speaking particularly to those who believe in the teaching of the Lotus Sutra, stating explicitly that he has constantly since the infinite past been instructing and leading living beings in all parts of the universe. And so, casting aside all doubts, they must see and venerate the fundamental Law, the Eternal Original Buddha, in the figure of Shakyamuni. That is to say, the principal focus of devotion for believers in the Lotus Sutra must be the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni, the Great Benevolent Teacher, the World-honored One. Establishing the main focus of devotion is the most important thing for a believer. This chapter makes the principal focus of devotion quite clear.

Another significant point here is that Shakyamuni does not say that he has proclaimed the teachings throughout the universe from the very beginning. He says, "From that time forward I have constantly been preaching and teaching in this saha world." He goes on to say that he has been leading and providing benefit to all living beings in innumerable other places. I believe there is a significant lesson for us here.

The Buddha's compassion is impartial. Having instructed and led the saha world, he goes on to save beings of other worlds, so there should be no distinction among them. From our human viewpoint, however, there is a natural order in the bodhisattva way that we practice. We cannot just declare that we will save the world and then set out to do it.

The proper order is to first save those closest to us and then extend our concern toward those with whom we have certain relationships. In terms of locality, we start by making our village or town better, then extend our efforts to our district or region. Gradually, as our ability develops, we may extend teaching and salvation to the nation and, ultimately, to the world.

Some people are so impelled by gratitude for the teachings that they boast that they plan to save the world. It is fine to have great ambition, and it is admirable to aspire to save the world. But no matter how grand one's aspiration, unless it is accompanied by actual deeds they will result in nothing. A person who is unable to save even one of his or her friends will certainly not be able to save the entire world. Despite having a great aspiration and splendid dream at the start, such a person will collapse before he or she knows it. The reason is that while the aspiration is great and true, the strength is inadequate.

Strength is developed by slow degrees. No one has sufficient power to teach the entire world at a single stroke. Through first saving one person, then guiding two people to

the truth, then teaching the Way to three others, slowly but surely, like a snowball gathering speed as it rolls downhill, one builds up one's strength in teaching the true Way. The expression "extending from near to far" does not refer merely to the realm of exertion, but in a deeper sense refers also to the strength to make that exertion. We should understand Shakyamuni's distinction between "preaching and teaching in this saha world" and "leading and benefiting all living beings in other places" in this light.

TEXT Good sons! During this time I have ever spoken of myself as the Buddha Burning Light and other [buddhas], and also have told of their entering into nirvana. Thus have I tactfully described them all.

COMMENTARY It has become clear that Shakyamuni attained enlightenment in the infinite past and has always been preaching and teaching in this saha world. Perceiving that those assembled seem to be wondering about the relationship between Shakyamuni and the Buddha Burning Light—who appeared in this world in the past, saved living beings, and departed from this world—and other buddhas, Shakyamuni responds to their doubts by explaining that the Buddha Burning Light (Dipamkara) and other buddhas, who appeared in the past to save all sentient beings, were forms of Shakyamuni (the Original Buddha).

- *Have told of their entering into nirvana.* The nirvana spoken of here is not the state wherein all illusions are extinguished, but should be taken in the sense of becoming extinct and leaving this world. This is the meaning of nirvana in the following passage in chapter 1, "Introductory": "Today, at midnight, will the tathagata enter the nirvana of no remains." On many different occasions the Buddha says that he will disappear from the world.

- *Tactfully described.* In this case to describe means to discern and discriminate the Law so that everyone can understand it clearly.

TEXT Good sons! Whenever living beings come to me, I behold with a buddha's eyes all the faculties, keen or dull, of their faith and so on. And I explain to them, in stage after stage, according to their capacity and degree of salvation, my different names and the length of my lives, and moreover plainly state that I must enter nirvana. I also, in various tactful ways, preach the Wonderful Law which is able to cause all the living to beget a joyful heart.

COMMENTARY Here we come to understand more deeply the meaning of tactfulness. Not only is tactfulness considered inestimable in the teaching of the Buddha, but we also see here that the appearance of Shakyamuni in this world is in and of itself the beneficent tactfulness of the Eternal Original Buddha, which causes sentient beings to live in the proper way. The same is true of other buddhas.

The Original Buddha is like the radio waves of television. These waves are being transmitted all around us, but unless

there is "tactfulness" in the form of a television set, we can neither see an image nor hear a sound. The Original Buddha pervades every corner of this world, but it is because of the tactfulness of the Buddha's appearance as a buddha of present existence that we register that salvation and are able to comprehend keenly just how great a blessing it is.

Because the receptivity of living beings varies from extremely high to very low, the Buddha distinguishes the capacity of each one, increasing or decreasing the voltage and altering the wavelength as it were, appearing as the form of buddha that exactly matches each one and presenting the teaching in a manner that is easy to receive. This is the compassionate tactfulness of the Buddha.

- *The faculties . . . of their faith and so on.* This refers to the five roots of emancipation (*pañcendriyani*): faith, endeavor, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. They are the fundamental conditions of the life of faith.

Faith is the spiritual basis upon which one establishes belief. As was explained in detail in chapter 4, "Faith Discernment," religion is not something that can be merely understood intellectually and still provide the power of salvation for oneself and others. It is only when one believes in the very depths of one's mind what one has come to understand that salvation results. That is true faith.

Endeavor is an undiluted, unchanging spirit of effort. Faith alone is insufficient; unless one constantly endeavors to keep that faith free of impurities, to keep it from weakening or backsliding, and to strengthen it, it cannot be called true faith.

Mindfulness is remembering something and never forgetting it. Mindfulness refers to the spirit that remembers the Buddha and never forgets him. In actual fact, of course, it is virtually impossible to not forget the Buddha for even one second. When students are absorbed in studying and workers are engrossed in their jobs, they must concentrate their minds on that alone. This accords with the Way of the Buddha. Even at such times, however, one may briefly stop and think, "My life is sustained by the Buddha." When one draws a deep breath after finishing a job, one may think gratefully, "Good. Sure enough, I am being watched over by the Buddha." Or when one is tempted to do wrong or suddenly becomes angry, one may suddenly reflect, "Is this the Way of the Buddha? If I do this will the Buddha be pleased?" Mindfulness is this spirit of keeping the Buddha in one's mind and recalling him from time to time.

Concentration is the source of the focused mind. Regardless of what mishaps occur around one, no matter how one's fortunes change, one's mind remains unshaken. Concentration is the basis of a quiet, composed mind.

Wisdom is the foundation of true prudence. Wisdom does not mean a narrow concern with one's own interests. True wisdom surpasses egotistic attachment and sweeps away all delusions. As long as one has this kind of wisdom, one will never be tempted to stray from the right path.

Naturally, wisdom is important in daily life, but it is also

• *My different names and the length of my lives.* The Buddha is originally united in the Eternal Original Buddha, but in the different appearances his names include the Tathagata Amitabha, the Tathagata Medicine Master, and the Buddha Burning Light. This is the meaning of “my different names.” The Lotus Sutra also teaches that some buddhas abide in this world for hundreds of kalpas, while others remain for dozens of kalpas. “The length of my lives” refers to the differing lengths of buddhas’ lives.

TEXT Good sons! Beholding the propensities of all the living toward lower things, so that they have little virtue and much vileness, to these men the Tathagata declares: “In my youth I left home and attained Perfect Enlightenment.”

COMMENTARY *Propensities . . . toward lower things.* This refers to the belief that having the awareness of the shravaka or the pratyekabuddha is sufficient. To those who hold such a belief, Shakyamuni explains his own past as the trace Buddha, teaching them that if they only make the same kind of effort they too will attain such a state.

There could hardly be a greater form of encouragement. It is difficult for ordinary people to grasp the teaching that there is a god in heaven that cannot be seen and that we should obey that being’s words. It amounts to saying that one should follow what an invisible person says. In Buddhism, however, we are fortunate in having Shakyamuni as a living model. We need only assiduously follow in his majestic footsteps; no teaching provides a greater sense of security and hope.

The Buddha proclaims that he preaches to those who are content with “lower things” that they should follow him, and to those of us who live in the latter days this is a great source of encouragement. Of course we ought to seek out and strive for greater things, but as we do we must not forget that we follow the path already trod by Shakyamuni one step at a time.

• *Little virtue and much vileness.* “Little virtue” means that the merit accumulated so far is quite small. “Much vileness” means that there are many defilements heaped one upon another. Defilements refer to earthly cares. Earthly cares are not part of the essence of humanity but are merely things that become attached to the surface of humanity. Although they are attachments, earthly cares are not external in origin but rather develop when the instincts of human beings degenerate. Defilements are like an admixture of dead skin, sebum, and sweat. When one habitually cleanses one’s mind, defilements do not accumulate, but when one is neglectful, dirt and grime accumulate quickly on the surface of the mind, concealing the buddha-nature.

TEXT But since I verily became Buddha, thus have I ever been, and thus have I made declaration, only by my tactful methods to teach and transform all living things, so that they may enter the Way of the Buddha.

This image of the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni enshrined in the Great Sacred Hall as Rissho Kosei-kai’s focus of devotion symbolizes the integration of the Eternal Original Buddha and the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni.

important in faith. If one becomes caught up in the cravings of self-centeredness, one may inadvertently stray off into a mistaken faith. When faith is mistaken, no matter how much one believes, endeavors in that path, constantly remembers it, and concentrates on its teachings, because it is the wrong path there is no salvation, and one simply falls deeper into delusion. Actual cases of this in society are innumerable and are both frightening and unfortunate. Consequently, although wisdom is the last of the five faculties, it is the most important.

• *A buddha’s eyes.* This refers to the greatest of all the ways of seeing things. Not only do a buddha’s eyes see through to the real aspect of all things, but they see everything with compassion, as well. Fundamental is a compassionate spirit that wants all beings to manifest their value to the fullest and live as they truly are. I have explained the five types of vision in detail in the May/June 2002 issue of DHARMA WORLD. They consist of the correct physical eye, the divine eye, the wisdom eye, the Dharma eye, and finally the way of seeing that is filled with compassion, in other words, the way of seeing things as they truly are that we call the Buddha eye.

When one looks upon living beings with “a buddha’s eyes,” one is naturally able to see how best to guide each individual. In the Buddha this is complete and faultless. Although we ordinary people cannot possibly attain such a state, through striving to practice the Buddha Way we can gradually approach it. It is crucial for believers always to strive to see all things with compassion.

COMMENTARY *Enter the Way of the Buddha.* In contemporary language we refer to this as “entering the way of truth.” By studying and becoming aware of the truth of this world, the true Dharma taught by the Buddha, and placing our entire lives on the path of its truth we enter the Way of the Buddha.

TEXT Good sons! All the sutras which the Tathagata preaches are for the deliverance of the living. Whether speaking of himself or speaking of others, whether indicating himself or indicating others, and whether indicating his own affairs or the affairs of others, whatever he says is all real and not empty air.

COMMENTARY This passage concerning the working of the perfect freedom of buddhas is of great significance.

- *Whether speaking of himself.* The word *himself* refers to the true form (the Law-body), and therefore to the Original Buddha. Thus “speaking of himself” means to preach about the Law-body, which is the Original Buddha.

- *Or speaking of others.* The word *others* here refers to other buddhas (the reward-body) in which the Original Buddha manifests himself, such as the Buddha Burning Light and the Tathagata Amitabha. Therefore “speaking of others” means preaching about the reward-body.

- *Whether indicating himself.* The word *himself* refers to the Buddha who appeared in this world, that is, Shakyamuni. Hence he is referring to the manifest-body.

- *Or indicating others.* This refers to those who have appeared in this world as saints and sages. In addition to widely revered saints and sages, they include ordinary people virtually unknown beyond their immediate neighborhoods. Depending upon our resolution and deeds, we too can become buddhas in this sense of the word.

- *Whether indicating his own affairs or the affairs of others.* There are various interpretations of this phrase, but I believe the following is the most practical. The salvation of the Buddha is what places our minds on the path of the truth, causes us to live correct lives, and creates harmony between us and everything around us. “His own affairs” means that the salvation of the Buddha’s great benevolence and compassion appears directly as salvation. “The affairs of others” means that salvation does not always appear directly as salvation.

For example, imagine that one’s abdomen suddenly begins to hurt. The pain is a warning that something strange has occurred in the stomach or intestines. It indicates that one may have either eaten or drunk more than one can digest or that some harmful bacteria have begun to propagate and that as a result the body is out of balance. To get rid of the pain, one either takes medicine or goes to see a doctor. Until the condition is alleviated, one will undoubtedly be moderate in eating or drinking.

What would we do if no pain occurred? If the problem was caused by neglect of our health, we would continue to live carelessly, and eventually the stomach and intestines would totally break down. How much more disastrous it would be

if cholera or typhus bacteria were breeding in the digestive tract. With no warning sign of accompanying pain or fever, we might soon reach a condition from which recovery would be impossible. Without the mediation of pain and distress, unwelcome and unpleasant as they are, we would be unaware that something terribly wrong was occurring in the body.

This is not true of the body alone. As we have seen in the Parable of the Burning House, when people indulge themselves in the pleasures of the five desires, they are unaware of the hellish fire burning their bodies and minds. People do reflect on themselves, however, when they feel some spiritual affliction, suffering, anxiety, or emptiness. They reflect on their lives, asking themselves whether their current state is satisfactory and what will become of them if they remain in such a spiritual state. Becoming conscious of affliction and suffering is the first step on the path to salvation.

Consequently, troubles of the mind are steppingstones toward becoming a better person, and this is surely to be welcomed. When we do not succumb to such pain but overcome it by our own efforts, we elevate ourselves. When we feel distress in any aspect of our life, because it is evidence that something untoward is occurring in our mind or body or that there is conflict or resistance between ourselves and our surroundings, we ought to accept it meekly and immediately endeavor to return mind and body to the path of the truth. We must surmount it in accordance with the correct nature of things. The occasion for this is one of the salvations of the Buddha.

There are, thus, times when the Buddha’s salvation does not at first seem like salvation at all. This is what is meant by “the affairs of others.” It is necessary to pay careful attention when dealing with them, since in our daily lives we have more experience with “the affairs of others” than with “his own affairs.”

Shakyamuni is saying that “whether speaking of himself or speaking of others, whether indicating himself or indicating others, and whether indicating his own affairs or the affairs of others,” the teaching is all true, never false, never void—that is, nothing is in vain when it comes to the goal of elevating humankind and bringing people to enlightenment.

Herein lies the boundlessness of Buddhism. The teachings of the Buddha in no way oppose the teachings of Christ or Muhammad or of sages like Confucius, Mencius, and Lao-tzu. As I have already mentioned, those great saints and sages are likewise manifestations of the Buddha, and one can clearly see that their teachings are manifestations of the teachings of the Buddha. This is not simply my interpretation because I am a Buddhist. Because the Original Buddha is neither arising nor perishing and is the fundamental Law that gives life to all things, there can be no teaching that is not embraced by the fundamental Law and no Law other than the fundamental Law. Consequently, those who make exclusivist claims that Buddhism is the real thing and consequently there is no value in Christianity, for instance, are not true Buddhists.

That which is correct is correct regardless of whose teaching it is. That which is true is true regardless of who teaches it. Since all great people who guide sentient beings according to correct teachings and messages of truth are revered as buddhas, there can be no opposition to them.

To use an everyday metaphor, nutrients are inseparable from the foods in which they are found, such as rice, bread, beans, vegetables, milk, and fish. Rice provides nourishment for the body, milk provides nourishment for the body, and vegetables provide nourishment for the body. Nourishment incorporates all the basic elements that sustain the body. It would be ludicrous to say, "I eat bread, milk, and vegetables, therefore I don't need nourishment." The truth expounded in the teaching of the Buddha is the "nourishment" of this metaphor. The teachings of all the saints and sages are like the separate foods of rice, vegetables, and milk. But the core of all these teachings is the truth of Buddhism.

Accordingly, the Buddha's teaching is a complete feast in which every nutrient necessary for sustaining the mind is present, so one need only partake of it. At the same time, one who is unwilling to partake of the teachings of Christianity or who sets aside particular dishes from the banquet table of the teachings of Confucius and Mencius is one who possesses a narrow mind and a small stomach. It goes without saying that this does not accord with the spirit of the Buddha, who envelops the whole universe.

Because the teaching of the Buddha is so vast and boundless, Shakyamuni, the trace Buddha who appeared in this world, did not reject other teachings, either. He also recognized the influential gods of the Brahmanism of his day—Brahma, Indra, Dhritarashtra, Virudhaka, Virupaksha, and Vaishnavana—both as sentient beings saved by hearing the teaching of the Buddha and as benevolent deities protecting the Buddha's Law with supernatural powers.

I have mentioned before that an influential general in Vaishali was a believer in Jainism, one of the prominent religions of India in the Buddha's time. Deeply moved upon hearing the Buddha preach the Law, he took refuge in it. He wanted to proclaim his conversion throughout the land, but the Buddha told him, "Doing that is not necessary." The Buddha continued, "Continue as you always have to support the religious tenets of Jainism." This great tolerance is the essence of Buddhism, and it is the true will of the Buddha.

While the true Dharma was being transmitted, the Buddha's spirit remained. Even the great king Ashoka, who united virtually all of India and was a devout Buddhist, did not move to suppress other religions but recognized freedom of religion.

One naturally wonders about Nichiren's admonition "Nembutsu [the Pure Land sects] will fall into Avici Hell; Zen is the act of the Mara king in the sixth heaven of the realm of desire who hinders the Buddha Dharma; Shingon [the True Word sect] will ruin the country; Ritsu [the sect of the precepts] corresponds to the traitor to the country," yet there is a rationale for it. At the time (the thirteenth century), already

the period of the Decay of the Law, there was opposition among the various Buddhist sects in Japan, and there was a tendency to lose sight of the true intention of the Buddha. Nichiren called for the eradication of sectarianism and said that the true believer was one who practiced the true will of the Buddha. He used such harsh language because otherwise the people of his time would not have opened their eyes. His aim was to bring about the Buddha's salvation by means of "the affairs of others."

Today, however, both clergy and the general public for the most part are endowed with reason, and their views have progressed, so there is no real need to resort to such expedients (tactful means). Because an expedient is a means of teaching that is appropriate to people's capacity, it is foolish to continue using the same expedient when people's capacity has changed. It results in improper practice of the Buddha's teaching.

In future the world must be bound together, both materially and spiritually, in accordance with the Buddha mind. This is a historical inevitability. The trend toward this is already emerging little by little. It is the mission of Buddhists to take the initiative and propel it forward. We must become deeply aware and, with great tolerance, join hands with adherents of other religions all over the world, working toward the building of a new age. This, without doubt, is the manifestation of the Buddha's true will in this age.

TEXT Wherefore? [Because] the Tathagata knows and sees the character of the triple world as it really is: [to him] there is neither birth nor death, or going away or coming forth; neither living nor dead;

COMMENTARY This passage is extremely difficult to understand.

- *Wherefore?* Having just said that the Tathagata's teaching is manifested in many ways, that all are true and none are void, Shakyamuni begins to elucidate the underlying reasons.

- *The triple world.* The realms of transmigration are divided into three worlds: the world of desire (*kama-dhatu*), the world of form (*rupa-dhatu*), and the formless world (*arupya-dhatu*). (See the March/April 1995 issue of DHARMA WORLD.) The Buddha is capable of penetrating the real aspect of the triple world. We are only capable of seeing the surface phenomena, but those who have achieved the enlightenment of a buddha are able to see the real aspect of all things.

- *Neither birth nor death, or going away or coming forth.* "Birth" and "death" refer to the fact that all beings are born and die, and also to the changes that all things undergo. "Going away" refers to the disappearance of phenomena, and "coming forth" refers to their manifestation. The phrase "neither birth nor death, or going away or coming forth" means that although it may appear that everything is changing, this is only at the level of phenomena; truth neither appears nor disappears. When we recall the truth of emptiness (see the January/February 1993 issue and the November/December

1997 issue of DHARMA WORLD), we will agree that this is an obvious truth.

- *Neither living nor dead.* “Living” refers to the time when Shakyamuni was living in this world. “Dead” refers to his entrance into nirvana. Therefore, “neither living nor dead” is a reference to not discriminating among people while the Buddha was alive and after his extinction. In other words, the Eternal Buddha is always in this world, always giving life and offering salvation to all sentient beings of every period equally. This is the great benevolence and compassion of the Original Buddha.

Because we ordinary people are in the habit of seeing things only as they appear, we lose sight of the Buddha’s all-encompassing compassion and sometimes become frightened, sad, or depressed. But those who through true faith in the Original Buddha have achieved enlightenment possess eyes to see the real aspect of all things, so they are able to comprehend fully that there is “neither living nor dead.”

If we have come this far in the study of the Buddha’s teachings, we should cast aside any sense that we are only ordinary people. With a serene mind and eyes that can penetrate the real aspect of things, we must believe and become enlightened to the fact that we are given life through the Buddha’s great benevolence and compassion. Unless we do this, studying all the sutras will be of no avail. The Buddha’s precious teaching will come to nothing.

I truly hope that readers will put aside merely studying the teachings intellectually and will reduce everything to the fundamental problem of one’s own faith, think deeply, read, and learn.

TEXT neither reality nor unreality; neither thus nor otherwise. Unlike [the way] the triple world beholds the triple world,

COMMENTARY *Neither reality nor unreality.* “Reality” here means seeing that things are actually there. “Neither reality,” then, means that seeing the form of things as actually existing, that is, being bound by appearances or phenomena, is mistaken. All things are intrinsically empty, so there is no way for them to remain unchanged and unrelated to everything else. Still, we should not jump to the conclusion that things are not there. That would be mistaken, too, for although things are not unchanging, what is there is actually there.

People often confuse nonexistence with emptiness, but “nonexistence” means that there really is nothing, while “emptiness” refers to everything that exists in this world according to the law of dependent origination but does not have an absolute substance. Therefore, it is mistaken to hold that nothing exists. In other words, things actually exist, but it is mistaken to assume, as ordinary people do, that things exist as they appear to the eye. It is essential to differentiate between the two.

Establishing this viewpoint is important because ordinary

people think that only what is visible actually exists and, caught up in such thinking, fall into confusion. There are also those who see things in a superficial, philosophical manner, adopt a nihilistic view of the world, and wind up becoming pessimistic.

Neither of these two ways of viewing the world grasps the real aspect of things. Neither view represents a correct conception of human life, and as a result neither can lead to a correct way of living. This is why the Buddha teaches “neither reality nor unreality.”

- *Neither thus nor otherwise.* “Thus” has a variety of meanings. Here it carries the meaning of constant or eternal, that is, always existing and never changing. “Neither thus” means that everything changes; there is not a single thing that exists just the way it is forever. If, however, one is preoccupied by the idea that things change, one does not have a firm sense of assurance. One has a feeling of helplessness, of precariousness. That is why we must constantly bear in mind “nor otherwise.” “Otherwise” means change, so “nor otherwise” means that things that appear to ordinary people to be changing are in essence entirely unchanging.

“Neither thus nor otherwise” means that it is distorted to see everything as either changing or unchanging. Ordinary people are liable to adopt such one-sided views, but if one has the eye of a tathagata, one can see through both that which does not change and that which does. In other words, one can see the real aspect of things.

- *Unlike [the way] the triple world beholds the triple world.* This is a natural consequence. In contrast to the way in which people living in the triple world see it in a narrow and blurred way, the Tathagata sees this world in its true aspect, with penetrating vision.

This sort of highly philosophical explanation is rather hard to relate to everyday life, so let us consider how this teaching fits into ordinary life. Take the example of the value put on a person’s academic credentials in Japan. When companies are hiring new employees, credentials are the very first thing considered. Young people about to step out into the world become frantic in their efforts to attain excellent academic credentials. But academic accomplishment both exists and does not exist. What is actually important is what a person was able to learn at school; which school one graduated from is no more than a superficial adornment of the reality. It is like the shiny foil that wraps a bar of chocolate. No matter how pretty the wrapper may be, it is inedible. In other words, it is not reality.

Judging a person on the basis of academic credentials is like judging whether chocolate is delicious by looking only at the wrapper. This is hardly a dependable way to make such a decision. Meanwhile, there is great futility in young people single-mindedly pursuing entrance to schools with superior reputations; that is nothing more than wanting to be wrapped in bright, shiny paper.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to overlook academic credentials altogether. If a person has studied well, he or she has

presumably acquired a deeper and broader understanding, so in that sense high school is better than middle school and going to university is better than only finishing high school. Therefore, one cannot dismiss academic credentials as unreality. Thus, it is a mistake to see academic credentials as reality and become captivated by them, just as one should not see them as unreality and ignore them entirely. What is important is to see through the surface to the content. This is seeing the true aspect.

Next, let us turn to “neither thus nor otherwise.” Depending on our viewpoint, everything seems to be either changing or not changing. For example, the parent-child relationship in Japan appears to have changed considerably since World War II. Previously, when a child came before his or her father, he or she would sit properly, make a formal bow, and speak respectfully. But now children speak frankly and are as unreserved as they are with their friends. Yet one should not assume from this that children have lost respect for their fathers. If the father is worthy of respect, the child will respect him. It is simply that the child no longer shows that respect in a formal way.

Does this mean that it is permissible to be rude as long as one *feels* respectful? Hardly. One may be unreserved, but certain rules are still necessary. Young people today who really respect their fathers still exercise some moderation.

In this way, the expression of feelings in the parent-child relationship slowly change according to the times. This is “neither thus.” A stubborn father who does not comprehend this may become angry, thinking that the child does not respect him or that the child is being unfilial, and this causes complications and fissures in the relationship.

Regardless of the times, the reality of parent-child affection does not change. This is “nor otherwise.” All that changes is the way in which those feelings are expressed. If the father realizes that and can remain even tempered, he will be able to see the real aspect of the child. With this sort of broad understanding, the relationship between parent and child will develop smoothly. The same can be said of all human relationships, whether between husband and wife, friends, colleagues, or business partners.

In other words, whatever we look at, we ought not be preoccupied by just those aspects that change, nor should we be preoccupied by only those aspects that remain constant. Looking only at the aspects that differ is not a complete way of seeing, nor is looking only at those that are the same. We must take a balanced view, one that encompasses a broad aspect.

Let us look a little more deeply into how the teaching can be put into effect in daily life. First and foremost, “neither reality nor unreality” teaches us that we should not be complacent, assuming that something exists, nor should we be pessimistic, assuming that something does not exist. When it does exist, we should assume that it does not and be prepared for that; when it does not exist, we should assume that it does exist somewhere and make an effort to search it out.

The same can be said of our work. We should always do what we ought, not swayed by whether the goal is immediately visible. When we do this, our minds will always be at ease and we will always be able to lead a full life.

Let us take a river as an example. The water in it is constantly flowing. When we look at a meter-wide section of the surface, the water that was there a moment ago is already gone. The water there at this moment will not be there the next. We do not conclude from this that the river has disappeared, because it is of course still there.

Our bodies and minds are similar. Strictly speaking, the self that existed yesterday was different from that which exists today. Moment by moment the cells in our bodies are being replaced. On top of that, the condition of our intellectual faculties, our physical strength, our performance, have changed ever so slightly from the day before.

Nevertheless, we cannot say that what we were yesterday was entirely different from what we are today. This is because our minds and bodies are continuous from yesterday to today and from today to tomorrow. Just as we cannot block off a one-meter width of the river flowing in front of us and declare, “This is a river,” we cannot consider the body and the mind as belonging entirely to a discrete segment of time.

Therefore we cannot simply fall into thinking that yesterday was yesterday, today is today, and tomorrow’s wind will blow as it will, so we might as well pass this moment as merrily as possible. The river is constant, and the deeds (karma) we performed yesterday continue into today. The karma we accumulate today will surely be carried over to tomorrow. If we place poison in just that meter-wide segment of river water, the fish downstream will die. If we stir up just that one-meter width of river water, the muddy water will continue to be muddy as it flows downstream. So we should make the most of each day. We have to care for the present. For convenience we divide what we call time into past, present, and future, but in actuality there are no distinctions in our minds and bodies between past, present, and future.

We cannot isolate the one-meter width of water in front of us and call it present, and call the water upstream past and the water downstream future. All the water, including that upstream and downstream, is the present river. Our minds and bodies are of a whole and continually in the present. Therefore we must value the present. If we value the present, then even if there has been some muddiness upstream, it will clear up. And this will lead to a limpid river downstream. The present may seem like a fleeting moment, but actually it endures for eternity. And we ourselves live continually in this present moment. Let us look carefully at this present and make the most of it.

Let us move on to consider “neither thus nor otherwise.” It is easy for ordinary people to fall into the delusion that things that change are not actually changeable. For example, if we fall into thinking that our business has such a solid foundation that no matter what happens it will never be shaken, so it is all right to become engrossed in golf or nightlife, some-

thing entirely unforeseen may happen. Because the entire world is interconnected, we can never tell how an unforeseeable change in a distant nation may affect our economic environment. As a result, no matter how solid the foundation of an enterprise may be, or rather, no matter how solid it may appear to be, it is not unchangeable, so we must always consider that things may shift and not relax our normal diligence.

This much should be apparent to anyone who operates a business, but as you know, there are innumerable people who have failed because of conceit and negligence. So no matter how affluent one may be or how great a business leader or politician, one must open one's heart and kneel before the teaching of the Buddha.

To feel that the teaching of Buddha is the fundamental principle of human life in the universe but that it is remote from actual daily life is a great mistake. Precisely because it is a fundamental principle, it is applicable to actual life. That which does not hold true for actual life cannot be a fundamental principle.

The same can be said of the body. When we are in good health, we pay no attention to changes in our physical being. That is because the bodily changes that occur do so gradually. Therefore despite ourselves we develop overconfidence in the body. We tend to overestimate its capacities.

There are older people who do not realize that they are physically unable to indulge in the kind of heavy drinking they could when they were younger. They mistakenly think that the changeable is constant. There are always occasions for recognizing the changes in the body, but when a person overindulges in alcohol he or she ignores these warnings. The person who correctly knows the Buddha Law obeys the warnings with a flexible mind and is therefore able to enjoy a normal life span.

When the mind is pliant, we can easily comprehend such natural cautions. For example, when we are young we can nonchalantly embark on adventures, but as we grow older, most of us gradually become afraid of such adventures. This is only natural, because the physical capabilities we enjoyed when we were young gradually dwindle.

When we are young, we step quickly when descending a steep mountain road, but when we grow older we descend carefully, one step at a time. In youth, our legs are strong and our reflexes quick, but as we age the body knows that its ability to react promptly to an untoward event, such as a slip or a misstep, has declined. When we are young, we can recover quickly from injury, but the body realizes that when we are older we cannot recover quite so easily. Consequently, even if we are not conscious of it, the body becomes more cautious.

That is the natural form of warning. An older person who is pliant will obey this cautionary advice and slowly descend the mountain, but one who wants to show off will jog down briskly, and may end up falling and even breaking a leg. This is a case of an older person not knowing how to be prudent. So we ought not to be deluded into thinking that what

changes is actually constant. When we look at things with an unprejudiced eye, changes are easily visible. Complying with those changes is the proper way to live.

We cannot say, however, that being preoccupied by change is the correct way to live, either. "I've grown old and I can't keep up with young people. There's no reason to work. I'll just depend on my children and enjoy my remaining years." For a sixty- or seventy-year-old to think this way is the result of becoming preoccupied by change. Despite growing old, we are bound to have some ability that has not diminished. Whether it be experience, intellect, skill, ability to take charge, or leadership capacity, the proper way to live is to utilize what we have and work for the betterment of humankind as long as we draw breath.

After retiring from politics Winston Churchill published a large number of works, including his memoirs, and late in life was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. The kabuki actor Nakamura Utaemon V, even when it became difficult for him to walk due to old age, was helped onto the stage and continued to give superb performances while seated. The priest Gempo Yamamoto, said to be a reincarnation of the Zen priest Hakuin (1685–1768) embarked upon the rigorous ascetic practice known as the Diamond Samadhi (*vajrasamadhi*) when he was eighty-nine. Despite his failing eyesight and flagging physical strength, he continued reciting from memory great portions of the Diamond Sutra (*Vajracchedika-prajnaparamita-sutra*) until his death at the age of ninety-six.

So far I have written almost entirely about older people, but the same can be said of young people. For example, as a result of the postwar Japanese constitution, women possess the same rights as men. This is a major change. It is simply a recognition of equal rights as human beings, however; there has been no change related to the female body, which enables women to give birth. In this respect, things remain constant.

Therefore, to say that because men and women have equal rights women can deport themselves in the same way as men is to be preoccupied by change and does not stand to reason. Of course there are some who behave that way, but for the most part, especially among those who have listened to the teaching of the Buddha, women lead womanly lives in accord with natural wisdom.

If in this way we learn from the Buddha's way of seeing things and do not allow ourselves to be swayed by existence, nothingness, change, and constancy but devote ourselves to seeing the real aspect of things, we will be able to lead correct, cheerful lives and be fully capable of carrying out the mission for which we were born into this world.

To be continued

In this series, passages in the TEXT sections are quoted from *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1975, with slight revisions. The diacritical marks originally used for several Sanskrit terms in the TEXT sections are omitted here for easier reading.

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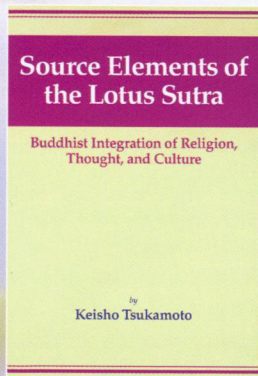
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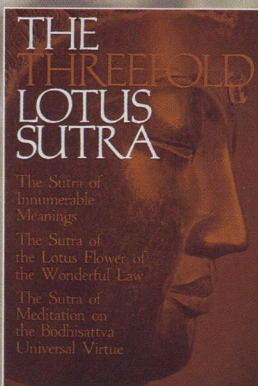
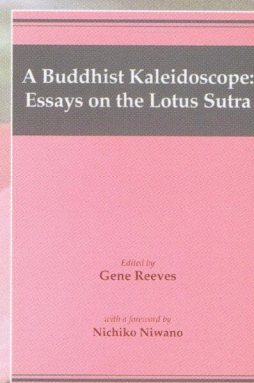
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