

## Soka Gakkai's Campaigns for Nuclear Disarmament

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**ABSTRACT:** Soka Gakkai developed in Japan in the aftermath of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and few causes are dearest to its members than the campaign for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The paper reviews the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its consequences in Japan and internationally, noting the problems preventing the United Nations from effectively achieving the aim of nuclear disarmament. In the second part, it details the anti-nuclear activities of Soka Gakkai, starting from the seminal speech of September 8, 1957 in Yokohama by its second president, Josei Toda. It then summarizes the efforts of Soka Gakkai's third president, Daisaku Ikeda, on behalf of nuclear disarmament, and their results.

**KEYWORDS:** Soka Gakkai, Soka Gakkai's Anti-Nuclear Campaigns, Nuclear Disarmament, Josei Toda, Daisaku Ikeda.

### *A National and International Trauma: Hiroshima and Nagasaki*

By mid-1945, Germany had been defeated, but World War II was not over. Japan was still fighting fiercely, and between April and July inflicted to the Allied Forces casualties amounting to half of those they had suffered in the previous three years of war in the Pacific. On July 26, 1945, U.S. President Harry Truman (1884–1972), UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874–1965) and Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) met in Germany and issued the Potsdam Declaration, calling for Japan's surrender. Japan was asked to abandon all the territories it had occupied since the beginning of the war, accept the temporary presence of American troops on its soil, disarm its military forces, allow war criminals to be judged, and start a transition towards democracy. "Prompt and utter destruction" was threatened if Japan refused these conditions,

a wording later interpreted as an allusion to the fact that the U.S. were in possession of the atomic bomb.

Japan rejected the terms of the Potsdam Declaration and refused to surrender. The U.S. realized that a final conventional assault on Japan would have a heavy cost in terms of American casualties. Although how the decision was reached remains controversial among historians (Walker 2005), many agree that in the end it was the opinion of Secretary of State James Byrnes (1882–1972) that prevailed, and President Truman ordered the use of the newly developed atomic bomb (McNelly 2000).

The story of what followed is well-known (see Rotter 2008). On August 6, 1945, a B-29 bomber, piloted by Colonel Paul Tibbets (1915–2007) and named “Enola Gay” after the pilot’s mother, reached Hiroshima, a city in Japan’s Honshu island with a population of 300,000. At that time, Hiroshima hosted 43,000 Japanese soldiers. At approximately 8:15 a.m. local time, the Enola Gay dropped a 9,700-pound atomic bomb over the city. 70,000 died immediately, but the total casualties are estimated around 200,000, considering the radioactive fallout and the subsequent deaths due to cancer and other after-effects of the bombing (Sherwin 2003).

How the explosion was perceived in Hiroshima was later told to American psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton by a survivor:

The appearance of people was... well, they all had skin blackened by burns ... They had no hair because their hair was burned, and at a glance you couldn’t tell whether you were looking at them from in front or in back... They held their arms bent [forward] like this... and their skin—not only on their hands, but on their faces and bodies too—hung down... If there had been only one or two such people... perhaps I would not have had such a strong impression. But wherever I walked I met these people... Many of them died along the road—I can still picture them in my mind—like walking ghosts (Lifton 1967, 27).

Three days after Hiroshima, on August 9, another American plane carried a second atomic bomb to the city of Kokura. The city, however, was covered by heavy clouds and smoke from the conventional bombing of nearby Yahata, which the Americans had carried out the previous day. Major Charles Sweeney (1919–2004), who piloted the B-29 plane carrying the bomb, had orders to drop it visually rather than by radar. Since this was impossible, Kokura was saved and Sweeney dropped the bomb on his

secondary target, the city of Nagasaki (Sweeney, Antonucci and Antonucci 1997), whose population in 1945 was estimated at 263,000. The fact that Nagasaki had been built on a sequel of hills and narrow valleys reduced the impact of the bomb, notwithstanding the fact that it was more powerful than the one dropped on Hiroshima. Estimates of casualties in Nagasaki are a matter of discussion among historians. They range from 36,000 to 80,000.

On August 15, Emperor Hirohito (1907–1989) announced Japan's unconditional surrender, citing impossibility to resist the “new and most cruel bomb” (Asada 1996). The surrender was formalized on September 2, 1945, on board of US battleship Missouri. The deadliest war in human history officially ended, but the debate on the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had just started. It continues to this very day (Orr 2008). Certainly, the end of the deadliest war ever was a positive development, but the price innocent Japanese civilians had to pay remains a matter of contention. Brazilian scholar Bruna Navarone Santos has studied how history textbooks in different countries tell students the history of the two atomic bombs. Narratives range from a tragic necessity as the conflict needed to be ended to a war crime (Navarone Santos 2019).

In subsequent decades, the use of nuclear weapons against a civilian population would have been judged as a crime against humanity under the norms and principles of international law adopted after World War II. However, even in 1945, international law and the Geneva Conventions were in place. These conventions clearly stipulated the principle of a clear distinction between combatants and civilians. There were soldiers in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the majority of those who died were civilians.

The debate on the nuclear continues. Paradoxically, in 2011, Japan lived another nuclear tragedy caused by the collapse at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant in Okuma, demonstrating that even nuclear energy used for civilian purposes may be unsafe and deadly.

### *The Aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*

Unfortunately, history is always written by the victors. A “revisionist” history still occasionally tries to justify the bombs (Maddox 2007). It is very

important to remember that the atomic bombings not only were the means to end World War II, but also gave the Americans and their Western allies decisive strategic advantages in the post-war global politics. The bombs played a role in paving the way to a new world order, build by the Western allied powers together with the Soviet Union, a global order in which, after 74 years, we still live in.

Even though, in the Spring of 1945, only 26 countries participated in drafting the Charter of the United Nations, it was a seminal document on the peaceful cohabitation between states, ideally preventing further conflicts and providing means for their peaceful resolution. The Charter was signed by 51 original member states, and entered into force on 24 October 1945, leading to the creation of the United Nations organization.

The Charter starts with the words “We, the People...” At least in words, the people were put at the center of the action of the United Nations. Certainly, the founding fathers of the United Nations included in the document positive and genuinely humanistic ideals, aimed at preventing another deadly war between states. Yet, there was one essential problem, which existed since the creation of the United Nations and has remained insurmountable to this day. The real, and legally binding, decisions are taken by one universally accepted organ only—the Security Council of the United Nations. In fact, by five permanent members: United States, Russia (back then, Soviet Union), Great Britain, France, and China (the Republic of China, i.e. Taiwan, until 1971, and the People’s Republic of China since that date). The Security Council would never be able to take any decision on peace and security in the world if one of the permanent members would oppose it, which means that all decisions can only be adopted if none of the five permanent members votes against them.

On many occasions, while the Security Council was unable to take necessary action to prevent war and bloodshed of civilians, the General Assembly of the United Nations, where all members have equal rights, passed resolutions exposing the incapacity and biasedness of the Security Council’s permanent members. However, these resolutions have a moral value only. It was always impossible to use them to take collective action and prevent human suffering, for the very simple reason that all decisions taken by the General Assembly are merely advisory and cannot be enforced.

Theoretically, the humanistic aim of the United Nations is to maintain “international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, achieving international co-operation, and being at the center for harmonizing the actions of nations.” In practice, the reality is much less humanistic, and the states are not equal. The system has been created in the aftermath of World War II, and the only international body which has the legal and universally accepted power to take decisions to prevent and resolve international conflicts, the Security Council, is one of the most undemocratic entities we know of.

For many years, most of the United Nations’ member states requested a reform of the Security Council. Despite all possible compromises proposed, nothing happened, for the simple reason that a final agreement on reform should be approved by the same five permanent members of the Security Council, for which losing their exceptional privilege in international decision-making is simply too much to ask.

The Security Council of the United Nations has been created by the countries that won World War II. All five of them are legal possessors of nuclear weapons. Not that the United Nations is not concerned about atomic bombs. In 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force. The NPT is a landmark international treaty, whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapon technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. A total of 191 states have signed the Treaty.

It may look very good, but again, theory should be distinguished from practice. And in practice, no nuclear country believes that one day it will accept to give up its nuclear supremacy or disarm. Even non-proliferation so far worked only partially. Despite NPT obligations, some nuclear states shared their technology with Pakistan, India, and Israel. Pakistan and India have openly admitted that they do have nuclear weapons. Israel continues to vehemently deny it. Once Iraq tried to acquire them, its programs were stopped. The battle against Iran’s and North Korea’s nuclear ambitions is still ongoing.

The horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki shook human consciousness to its core. Some of the fathers of the United Nations, who actively participated in creating this global order in which we live now, sincerely believed that there was an historic opportunity to create a new and better world for generations to come. They spared no effort to save our world from another tragedy. Unfortunately, the narrow interests of some countries took over. Instead of a world of peace, a world of dominance, fear and war was created.

Nobody forgot the unspeakably horrific effect of the nuclear attacks against the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At that time, many believed that this horror would persuade the world and its leaders that everything possible should be done to ensure that another such tragedy will never happen again. And yet, today we are confronted with the same challenges. Some eight countries in the world may use nuclear weapons against anybody anytime. Military spending amounts to 1,7 trillion US dollars per year globally, an amount of money that could cover all humanitarian and development needs in the world. Rather than decreasing, this spending has been increased to develop more and more sophisticated weapons such as lethal autonomous weapon system (LAWS) using artificial intelligence (AI) and others. This is a clear indication that the dominant powers are not ready in any way to change their mindset and thus change the world.

The good news is that these countries are not the entire world. Their narrative of dominance is not the full story. There are also those, which from many years, backed by an active civil society, have been pushing the nuclear states to accept the principle of banning and eliminating atomic weapons, and diminishing military expenses with the final future goal of total disarmament.

The government of Japan, because of its military alliance with the U.S., is in a very delicate and precarious position. On the one hand, it cannot ignore its civil society's requests for disarmament, fueled by the tragic memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On the other hand, it must respect its obligations towards the U.S. and its nuclear umbrella.

The prevailing opinion of Japanese society about nuclear weapons is clear. The horror of the nuclear attacks against the population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has not subsided. The use of these lethal weapons not only killed hundreds of thousands and razed both cities to the ground. It had a lasting

effect on those who survived, one that continued for many generations to come.

The devastating end of World War II gave birth to a new Japan. This was a Japan that largely accepted the blame for the atrocities committed during World War II. It was a Japan that said “never again” to the same mistakes, and at its core became deeply pacifist. Unhealable scars and the experienced horror engraved the very spirit of Japanese culture. The lesson had been understood and internalized by most Japanese. Some devoted themselves to warn the world about the dangers of nuclear weapons and promote global nuclear disarmament. Among them were the leaders and members of Soka Gakkai, the largest lay Buddhist movement in the world.

### *Soka Gakkai’s Anti-Nuclear Campaign*

On September 8, 1957, the second president of Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda (1900–1958) spoke about the “absolute evil” of nuclear weapons in front of 50,000 Soka Gakkai youth in Yokohama’s Mitsuzawa Stadium. The year was significant. Also in 1957, prominent German scientists and intellectuals signed the Göttingen Declaration, urging Germany to repudiate nuclear weapons forever.

The words pronounced by Toda in 1957 remains in the heart of Soka Gakkai members to this very day:

I would now like to share with you what I hope you will regard as the foremost of my instructions for the future.

As I have long said, the responsibility for the coming era must be shouldered by the youth... Today I would like to state clearly my feelings and attitude regarding the testing of nuclear weapons, a topic that is currently being debated heatedly throughout society. I hope that, as my disciples, you will inherit the declaration I am about to make today and, to the best of your ability, spread its intent throughout the world.

Although a movement calling for a ban on the testing of atomic or nuclear weapons has arisen around the world, it is my wish to go further, to attack the problem at its root. I want to expose and rip out the claws that lie hidden in the very depths of such weapons. I wish to declare that anyone who ventures to use nuclear weapons, irrespective of their nationality or whether their country is victorious or defeated, should be sentenced to death without exception.

Why do I say this? Because we, the citizens of the world, have an inviolable right to live. Anyone who jeopardizes that right is a devil incarnate, a fiend, a monster. I propose that humankind applies, in every case, the death penalty to anyone responsible for using nuclear weapons, even if that person is on the winning side.

Even if a country should conquer the world through the use of nuclear weapons, the conquerors must be viewed as devils, as evil incarnate. I believe that it is the mission of every member of the youth division in Japan to disseminate this idea throughout the globe (Toda 1957).

As Toda's successor, Daisaku Ikeda, noted,

As a Buddhist for whom respect for life was a core principle, Toda was adamantly opposed to the death penalty. His invocation here of capital punishment should therefore be understood as an effort to undermine and uproot the logic that would justify the use of nuclear weapons. For Toda, nuclear weapons, which fundamentally threaten humanity's right to survival, represented an "absolute evil." He was determined to counteract any attempt to justify them as a "necessary evil" whose use might be viewed as an extension of conventional warfare (Ikeda 2009, 12–3).

The historical context of Toda's speech should also be noted. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a large anti-nuclear coalition, known as Gensuikyo, had been formed in Japan. However, as it is now known, this coalition was infiltrated by agents of the Soviet Union, and the Japan Communist Party (JCP) came to obtain a hegemonic role in it. Gradually, the Gensuikyo started arguing that only the Western atomic bombs were evil. Those in possession of the Soviet Union served an acceptable defensive purpose. Not unexpectedly, this double standard discredited the Gensuikyo in the eyes of Japanese public opinion. By 1957, when Toda pronounced his speech, Gensuikyo was collapsing. Soka Gakkai tried to offer a more believable alternative (Urbain 2010, 71). Even apart from the specific context, the strength of Toda's words remains. They are also noticeable for the use of a religious language and metaphors.

When, in 1960, Daisaku Ikeda succeeded Toda as President of Soka Gakkai, the fact that the fight against atomic weapons was not humanitarian or secular only, but was grounded on Buddhist values, became even more clear. Later, he recalled his reaction to Toda's words:

In making this declaration, my mentor [Toda] indicated that this was to be considered first among his instructions to his youthful followers and to subsequent generations... The importance and value of this landmark declaration

have grown more evident with the passing years and will continue to do so, I am confident, into the future (Soka Gakkai International 2011).

In September 1958, on the first anniversary of Toda's momentous speech, Ikeda had published a text called "A Way Out of the Burning House." The "burning house" was our world, threatened by the "unprecedented danger" of nuclear destruction. Ikeda found the "way out" in the Buddhist text that is at the very center of Soka Gakkai's religious experience, the *Lotus Sutra*. He quoted from there the parable of the three carts:

According to that parable, a wealthy man's house suddenly catches fire but, because the house is very spacious, his children who are inside remain unaware of the danger in which they are placed and show neither surprise nor fear. The man then finds ways to entice them to come out of their own accord, thus enabling all to exit the burning house unharmed (Ikeda 2019, 4).

Coming out of the burning house, here, involves something more than a mundane strategy. The children trapped into the burning house need a conversion of the heart. Ikeda emphasized this essential point in 2009:

If we are to put the era of nuclear terror behind us, we must struggle against the real "enemy." That enemy is not nuclear weapons *per se*, nor is it the states that possess or develop them. The real enemy that we must confront is the ways of thinking that justify nuclear weapons; the readiness to annihilate others when they are seen as a threat or as a hindrance to the realization of our objectives (Ikeda 2009, 32).

Soka Gakkai Buddhists believe in the possibility of an inner transformation of individuals. We can change ourselves not only by ceasing hostile acts but orienting our existence toward saving lives, thus transforming our societies at their core.

In 1973, Soka Gakkai youth members collected ten million signatures for nuclear abolition, which were sent in 1975 to the UN Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim (1918–2007). This was followed by the collection of another thirteen million signatures for a similar petition in 2000 (SGI Office of Public Information 2009, 4). In 1982, Ikeda organized the first exhibition "Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World," in support of the UN's World Disarmament Campaign. The exhibition opened at the UN Headquarters in New York, and toured twenty-five cities in sixteen countries, including the Soviet Union and China. In total it was viewed by some 1.2 million visitors (Urbain 2010, 72). In 1996, Ikeda founded the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, which included the abolition of nuclear weapons as one of its main goals and research projects.

The memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was always in the background of these initiatives. In 2005, the Soka Gakkai Women's Peace Committee in Japan filmed 31 female survivors talking about their experiences and compiled a DVD of eight of their accounts for educational purposes. More generally, the youth division of Soka Gakkai Japan compiled and published 80 volumes of more than 3,000 individual war experiences from World War II during the period from 1974 to 1985. The Soka Gakkai Women's Peace Committee in Japan published a 20-volume work, *In Hope of Peace*, which chronicles the experiences of women who lived through World War II (SGI Office of Public Information 2009, 4).

From 1983, Ikeda wrote every year a Peace Proposal to the United Nations. These texts are very interesting. They show an unusual (for a religious leader) understanding of the political dynamics of United Nations. All too often, religions often only rhetorical platitudes about peace and disarmament, without a real grasp of the highly technical mechanisms of the United Nations. The opposite is true for Ikeda and Soka Gakkai, who show a full understanding of the issues and command of the UN jargon. This was confirmed when, in 2006, Ikeda wrote a detailed proposal for a reform of the United Nations (Ikeda 2006). He wrote it cautiously, trying not to challenge directly the members of the Security Council. However, the text makes it clear that without a deep reform of how the United Nations work, its noble humanitarian aims cannot be achieved. In 2007, Ikeda appealed again to the United Nations when he launched the first People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition campaign, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Toda's anti-nuclear speech.

The 2006 proposal for United Nations reform should be read together with what is perhaps the most important text by Ikeda on nuclear disarmament, the 2009 five-point plan for nuclear abolition, originally published in Soka Gakkai's Japanese newspaper *Seikyo Shimbun*. In this text, Ikeda went back to the very roots of Soka Gakkai:

Just over 100 years ago, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), the founding president of the Soka Gakkai, proposed a new mode of competition, “humanitarian competition”—in which “by benefiting others, we benefit ourselves”—as a means of overcoming conflict among nations. He called on each state to engage in a positive rivalry to contribute to the world through humane action, in order to spread the spirit of peaceful coexistence and build a truly global society (Ikeda 2009, 33).

Ikeda explained that his five points were “all rooted in Makiguchi’s concept of humanitarian competition” (Ikeda 2009, 34). They included,

1. The five declared nuclear-weapon states to announce their commitment to a shared vision of a world without nuclear weapons at next year’s NPT Review Conference and to promptly initiate concrete steps toward its achievement.
2. The United Nations to establish a panel of experts on nuclear abolition, strengthening collaborative relations with civil society in the disarmament process.
3. The states parties to the NPT to strengthen nonproliferation mechanisms and remove obstacles to the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2015.
4. All states to actively cooperate to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security and to advance on a global scale toward the establishment of security arrangements that are not dependent on nuclear weapons by the year 2015.
5. The world’s people to clearly manifest their will for the outlawing of nuclear weapons and to establish, by the year 2015, the international norm that will serve as the foundation for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (Ikeda 2009, 18).

The five points have been promoted by countless initiatives organized by Soka Gakkai throughout the world. In Italy, in 2009, ten Soka Gakkai youth members met to study the five-point plan. This was the origin of *Senzatomica* (Without Atomic), a project that matured in a first exhibition organized in Florence in 2011, that gathered 60,000 visitors. Since then, *Senzatomica* has become a household name in Italy. Visitors are in the hundreds of thousands, and conferences and rallies accompany the exhibitions. There are similar initiatives in several other countries.

What did Soka Gakkai achieve? In his Peace Proposal for 2019, Ikeda noted that “the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)—an undertaking whose achievement was long considered impossible—was adopted two years ago” (Ikeda 2019, 1). Also in 2017, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) won the Nobel Peace Prize. Understandably, Soka Gakkai was proud of this recognition, and published a document emphasizing the very strict co-operation it had developed with ICAN during the previous ten years (Soka Gakkai 2017).

Yet, awards and even international treaties are not effective if they are not followed by decisive action. In the Peace Proposal for 2019, Ikeda mentions Toda’s grand vision of a total abolition of nuclear weapons, and writes that, “the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a forerunner of the

kind of international disarmament law that can help frame such a vision” (Ikeda 2019, 6). A “forerunner” is obviously not a done deal, yet Ikeda’s vision is based on a humanistic Buddhism teaching devotees never to lose hope.

Ikeda invites to “cultivate a mutual recognition of this pathology [of ‘peacelessness’] and join together in search of a cure. In other words, we must develop a common vision for a peaceful society” (Ikeda 2019, 6). In his latest Peace Proposal, Ikeda places nuclear disarmament within a larger framework based on “people-centered multilateralism,” going beyond the concept of national security, a “global compact on refugees,” and efforts to fight climate change. There is a clear sense that the campaign against nuclear weapons cannot be disassociated from a wider global effort for peace, solidarity, ecology, and justice:

The darker the night, the closer the dawn: now is the time to accelerate momentum toward disarmament by taking the present crises as an opportunity to create a new history. To this end, I would like to propose three key themes that could serve as a kind of scaffolding in the effort to make disarmament a cornerstone of the world in the twenty-first century: sharing a vision of a peaceful society, promoting a people-centered multilateralism and mainstreaming youth participation (Ikeda 2019, 2).

Once again, this effort is grounded on Buddhism.

Our sense that the sufferings of others bear no relation to us, the distaste we might even feel, was admonished by Shakyamuni as the arrogance of the young, the arrogance of the healthy, the arrogance of the living. If we reconsider that arrogance in terms of the connections of the human heart, we can clearly see how the apathy and lack of concern arising from arrogance actually deepens and intensifies the suffering of others (Ikeda 2019, 9).

Conversely,

our efforts to empathize with and support those struggling with difficulties help weave networks of mutual encouragement, giving rise to an expanding sense of security and hope. The focus of Buddhism is not confined to the inevitable sufferings of life, but takes in the reality of people confronting various difficulties within society. Thus, we find within the canon of Mahayana Buddhism (*The Sutra on Upāsaka Precepts*) encouragement to build wells, plant fruit trees and build water channels, help the old, the young and the weak to cross rivers and console those who have lost their land. This urges us to recognize that we are likely at some point to experience the suffering that afflicts other people—that there is no happiness which is our sole possession, no suffering that remains entirely confined to others—and to strive for the welfare of both self and others. In this, the essential spirit of Buddhism is expressed. Taking as one’s own the pains and

sufferings of others is exactly the philosophical wellspring for the SGI's activities as a faith-based organization (FBO) as we work to address global challenges... (Ikeda 2019, 10).

Ikeda is of course aware that in the international situation one can find ample cause for pessimism. He, however, mentions the example of the medieval Japanese monk Nichiren Daishonin (1222–1282), the originator of the Buddhist tradition to which Soka Gakkai belongs, when confronted with a deep national crisis in Japan in 1260.

At the time, the Japanese people suffered from repeated disasters and armed conflicts, and many were sunk in apathy and resignation. Society as a whole was permeated by pessimistic philosophies that despaired of the possibility of resolving challenges through one's own efforts, and many people's sole focus was on maintaining a sense of inner tranquility. Such ways of thinking and acting ran entirely contrary to the teachings animating the Lotus Sutra, which call on us to maintain unyielding faith in the potential existing within all people, to work for the full development and flowering of that potential and to build a society in which all people shine in the fullness of their dignity. Nichiren's treatise urges an earnest confrontation with the challenge of how to spark the light of hope in the hearts of people beaten down by repeated disaster, how to mobilize social change to prevent wars and internal conflicts. He thus stresses the need to root out the pathology of resignation that lies hidden in the deepest strata of our social being, infecting us all: "Rather than offering up ten thousand prayers for remedy, it would be better simply to outlaw this one evil." His treatise calls on us to reject resignation in the face of our deep social ills and instead to muster our inner human capacities so that we may together meet the severe challenges of our age as agents of proactive and contagious change (Ikeda 2019, 13).

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