

## **Daisaku Ikeda's Environmental Ethics of Humanitarian Competition: A Review of His United Nations Peace and Education Proposals**

Author: Jason Goulah

Assistant Professor of Bilingual-Bicultural Education

Director of World Language Education

DePaul University

[jgoulah@depaul.edu](mailto:jgoulah@depaul.edu)

Tel : 773.325.2076

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### **Introduction**

The increasing impact of climate change and environmental degradation in displacing people, causing war, and limiting basic human rights to potable water, sustainable food sources, safe habitats, and a livable planet have thrust front and center the intersection of global peace and environmental protection and sustainability. This article examines Daisaku Ikeda's (1928 - ) ethics of environmental protection, sustainable development and the cultivation of ecological consciousness as nodal points of peace, social justice and human dignity at (inter)national and individual levels.

Ikeda is perhaps best known as leader of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a lay Buddhist nongovernmental organization of 12 million members in 192 countries and territories; and while a substantial body of literature exists on Buddhist approaches to environmental ethics (e.g., Brown 1994; Brown 2008; Chappell 1999; Inada 1987; Kremmerer 2008; Rockefeller and Elder 1992), Ikeda's proposals and efforts—both Buddhist and secular—at institutionalizing the principles of peace, culture and education have remained limited or absent in academic literature, particularly as they relate to environmental protection and sustainability. Unlike other Buddhist scholar-practitioners working in these areas, Ikeda's contributions since the 1960s have uniquely and consistently focused on the United Nations, secular education, and individual action. Perhaps most recognizable is Ikeda's proposal for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development,

which began in 2005. The World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa included Ikeda's proposal and the UN General Assembly formally endorsed the decision. While Greenwood (formerly Gruenewald), Manteaw and Smith (2009) and others have championed the Decade, Ikeda's proposal has not been excerpted or explicated in extant academic literature. Similarly, Ikeda has submitted peace proposals to the UN annually since 1978 aimed at promoting the ideal of the UN and calling for reform of UN systems to expand the role of NGOs. Consistent themes in these proposals include the abolition of war and nuclear weapons, human and women's rights, poverty, hunger, refugees, spirituality, global citizenship, education and environmental issues; however, these proposals have also not been excerpted or explicated in extant literature. Thus, this article breaks new ground by excerpting and reviewing Ikeda's UN peace proposals, UN Decade education proposal and dialogues with leading individuals in politics, sciences, culture and education to articulate his ethics of peace, cooperation and social justice in the context of the natural environment. As no extensive explication of Ikeda's ideas and initiatives in this area exists, this article aims to stimulate new understandings of and research in environmental protection, sustainability and education worldwide.

For this article I examine the following works by Ikeda (1963, 1982, 1984a1, 1984b, 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Aitmatov and Ikeda 2009; de Athayde and Ikeda 2009; Derbolav and Ikeda 1992; Diéz-Hockleitner and Ikeda 2008; Galtung and Ikeda 1995; Henderson and Ikeda 2004; Huyghe and Ikeda 2007; Pauling and Ikeda 2009; Peccei and Ikeda 1984; Singh and Ikeda 1988; Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005; Toynbee and Ikeda 1976); and as Ikeda may not be well known, I begin with a brief biography couched specifically in the context of peace, followed by explanation of theoretical frameworks undergirding his environmental ethics.

### **Daisaku Ikeda: A Brief Biography in Peace**

Born in Tokyo in 1928, Ikeda experienced firsthand the human loss, anguish and turmoil of a nation at war. In the chaos of postwar Japan, Ikeda encountered educator, ardent pacifist and then leader of Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, who had been imprisoned for his resistance to Japan's war efforts. These experiences shaped Ikeda's deep commitment to peace; his initiatives in environmental protection and sustainable development are part and parcel of his wider vision for a global culture of peace and creative coexistence.

Ikeda's achievements as a peacebuilder and Buddhist philosopher represent a startling diversity of activity. He has founded numerous peace, cultural and educational institutions, including the Institute for Oriental Philosophy (with offices

in France, Hong Kong, India, Japan, United Kingdom and Russia), the Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning and Dialogue (formerly the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century; U.S.), the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research (Japan and US), the Min-On Concert Association (Japan), the Fuji Art Museum (Japan), the Victor Hugo House of Literature (France), and the secular Soka education system, which includes universities in Japan and the U.S., K-12 schools in Japan, a kindergarten and elementary school in Brazil, and kindergartens in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea.

While Ikeda has been the subject of what Gamble and Watanabe (2004) argue is libelous and unfounded derision in Japanese media, he is recipient of, among numerous other awards, the United Nations Peace Prize (1983), the Rosa Parks Humanitarian Award (1993), the Simon Wiesenthal Center International Tolerance Award (1993), and the Education as Transformation Award (2001). In addition, the world academic community has awarded Ikeda over 275 honorary doctorates and professorships for his efforts in peace, culture and education, and he was recently named the first honorary lifetime member of the John Dewey Society<sup>1</sup>.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

Scrutiny of the Ikeda corpus reveals numerous theoretical frameworks undergirding his views and activities. With respect to his conceptualization of human-environment interaction, environmental protection, and ecological consciousness, I focus on the theories of abstraction, humanitarian competition and *esho funi*.

### *Spirit of Abstraction*

Drawing on the work of existentialist philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), Ikeda (1992, 2009) argues that an individual and societal “spirit of abstraction,” the act of reducing the Other’s humanity and character into abstract concepts such as Communist, fascist, Zionist, fundamentalist and so on has wrought war, mammonism and, thereby, environmental degradation, climate change and the recent global economic meltdown. Marcel argued that people wage war or otherwise denigrate individuals only *after* abstracting them to the point of neglecting their humanity. Ikeda (1992) argued such spirit of abstraction promulgated the Russian Revolution, which oppressed, dehumanized and killed people based on abstract ideology. In 2009, he revisited the spirit of abstraction as the root cause of the global economic meltdown, whereby unbridled capitalism denigrated and oppressed the Other because of an abstract valuation of money.

This spirit of abstraction is pertinent to a discussion of environmental issues and sustainability for two reasons: First, Ikeda’s consideration of the spirit of abstraction in 1992 and 2009 present his view over time and space that it has led at once to the failure and dissolution of Russian Communism and its apparent

“victor,” capitalism, when that capitalism is unbridled and operates on inhumane ethics. Second, Ikeda argued such spirit of abstraction—in both instances—is simultaneously at the root of environmental degradation:

It goes without saying that the essence of our environmental problem is how we should go about creating a society that can exist in harmony with the natural ecosystem. For this reason, it is a compound problem that transcends the boundaries of politics, economics, science and technology. The environmental issue concerns the fundamental problem of how human beings live, including all fields of endeavor which range from their sense of values to the nature of culture in future societies. This is an issue that cannot be successfully solved only from the political or economic viewpoint of individual nations. We must instead proceed with a reformation of the consciousness of all the Earth’s people, a task that renders the need for internal spirituality all the more acute. In the course of my earlier discussion of the “abstract spirit” the issue of environmental destruction was on my mind constantly. Regardless of the system that embodies it, the “abstract spirit” has continued to wield the same deadly sword over the environment as it has over humanity itself. The horrible environmental devastation in the former communist countries, going far beyond anything we had dared imagine, is still fresh in our memories. Surely, the reformation of our internal consciousness, as citizens of the Earth who share a sense of crisis, is an issue that bears on the entire course of human history. (1992)

In 2008, Ikeda (2008b) revisited this application of the spirit of abstraction, arguing that abstract principles and ideas undergirding “religious fundamentalism, ethnocentrism, chauvinism, racism and a dogmatic adherence to various ideologies, including those of the market...take precedence over living human beings who in turn are forced into a subservient role” (12-13). Ikeda (2009) then applied such thinking to the environment, arguing that abstract principles of free-market capitalism have led to environmental degradation, destruction of the biosphere and global climate change. In his dialogue with Johan Galtung (Galtung and Ikeda 1995), Ikeda argued, “The current worldwide economic slump can hamper implementation by dampening enthusiasm for environmental protection. Unless the United Nations comes up with some very bold ideas, global environmental protection is unlikely to make much progress” (137).

### *Humanitarian Competition*

Fifteen years later, Ikeda argued that ecological destabilization in the midst of the current economic dislocation has provided humanity an opportunity to overcome the spirit of abstraction by pursuing a dialogic *humanitarian competition* toward creative coexistence instead of economic, political and militaristic competition consonant with the spirit of abstraction:

Herein lies the value of humanitarian competition. As a concept, it compels us to confront the reality of competition while ensuring that it is conducted firmly on the basis of humane values, thus bringing forth a synergistic reaction between humanitarian concerns and competitive energies. It is this that qualifies humanitarian competition to be a key paradigm for the twenty-first century. It is crucial here that we heed Gabriel Marcel's warning always to keep concrete realities in view. (2009: 20)

To this end, Ikeda (2009) references President Obama's economic stimulus and job creation strategy as a possible "Green New Deal" (29), but it and The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, albeit an historic bill passed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee to regulate greenhouse gasses for the first time in the nation's history and "create clean energy jobs, achieve energy independence, reduce global warming pollution and transition to a clean energy economy" (HR 2454: 1), evidence the limits imposed by political, economic and militaristic competition. Indeed substantive change can happen, Ikeda argues, only through a sincere commitment to humanitarian competition.

The concept of humanitarian competition (*jindouteki kyousou*; occasionally also translated as "humanistic competition") was first proposed by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), founding president of the Soka Gakkai, in his initial work, *Jinsei chirigaku* (The Geography of Human Life, 1903/1981-88, Vol. 1-2; hereafter *The Geography*; cf. Bethel 2002)<sup>3</sup>. *The Geography* examined the two-way relationship between humans and their natural environment as an educational means of developing students' social, moral and academic capabilities. Within this context, Makiguchi advocates humanitarian competition among nation-states as an alternative to economic, political and military competition, which he argued cannot foster or sustain mutual betterment or human happiness<sup>4</sup>:

There is no simple formula for this humanitarianism. Rather, all activities, whether of a political, military or economic nature, should be conducted in conformity with the principles of humanitarianism. What is important is to set aside egotistical motives, striving to protect and improve not only one's own life, but also the lives of others. One should do things for the sake of others, because by benefiting others, we benefit ourselves. This means to engage consciously in collective life. (1981-88, Vol. 2: 399)

Humanitarian competition occupies only a few pages (Vol. 2: 398-401) at the end of *The Geography* and never appears in any of Makiguchi's subsequent writings (which span ten volumes); however, Ikeda has continually returned to it as a central theme of his peace proposals and educational initiatives since first referencing it in 1996 in the context of education to meet the goals set forth in the UN Decade of Human Rights Education (e.g., 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002c, 2005, 2007b, 2008b, 2009; Henderson and Ikeda 2004). He argues, "I am fully convinced that the time has now arrived, a hundred years after it was originally proposed, for us to turn our attention to humanitarian competition as a guiding principal for the

new era” (Ikeda 2009: 19). Moreover, in promoting humanitarian competition with increasing urgency and repetition, Ikeda has refined the concept in two important ways. First, he argues that humanitarian competition provides a means for fostering environmental sustainability, social justice and peace:

Tsuneshaburo Makiguchi called for “humanitarian competition” among states. This was a vision of an international order in which the world’s diverse states strive to positively influence each other, to coexist and flourish together rather than pursuing narrowly defined national interests at each other’s expense. I feel that the work of solving the global environmental crisis provides a unique opportunity to move toward such a world. (2008b: 31)

Second, he envisions and articulates humanitarian competition vis-à-vis environmental issues (as well as with respect to other planetary concerns) among individuals in addition to nation-states: “Ecological integrity is the shared interest and concern of all humankind, an issue that transcends national borders and priorities. Any solution to the problems we face will require a strong sense of individual responsibility and commitment by each of us as inhabitants sharing the same planet” (ibid: 6). In 2009, he reiterates this conviction:

In my peace proposal last year, I called for humanitarian competition to be at the heart of efforts to solve the global environmental crisis, urging the promotion of renewable energy measures and energy efficiency initiatives as a way to realize a transition from dependence on fossil fuels to a low-carbon no-waste society. Recent developments suggest movement in this direction. (2009: 29)

### *Esho Funi*

According to Ikeda (2002), individual and (inter)national humanitarian competition requires a Bakhtinian dialogism among humans, cultures and the environment (e.g., Ikeda 1995a). For Ikeda, such dialogic interaction is based on the Buddhist principle of *esho funi*, or dependent origination, that sees the self and Other—the self and environment—as inseparably and cooperatively interconnected. In his definitive dialogue with Arnold Toynbee, Ikeda (Toynbee and Ikeda 1976) explains *esho funi*:

*Sho* stands for *shoho*, the independent life entity; *e* stands for *eho*, the environment supporting that life. Since human life influences and depends on its environment, the two—*Esho*—are inseparable—*Funi*. Should man and his environment be regarded as two separate and opposed entities, it would be impossible to grasp either in true perspective. Instead of remaining fixed and immutable, the environment changes according to the kind of life it supports. (38)

In 1978, Ikeda argued elsewhere (1987a) that, “The teaching [of *esho funi*] includes the idea that the subjective individual is, in fact, created by the environment.

Furthermore, it advocates splendid interrelations and harmony since it maintains that a revolution for the betterment of the interior environment can have a revolutionary, ameliorating effect on the exterior environment as well” (76-77). That is, “As life extends its influence into its surroundings, the environment automatically changes in accordance with the life condition. An environment, then, which is a reflection of the inner life of its inhabitants, always takes on the characteristics of those living within it” (163). Ikeda revisits this principle numerous times in his UN proposals and dialogues with regard to environmental issues and sustainable development. Brown (2008) Inada (1987) and others have also discussed environmental education and ecological consciousness from the perspective of this Buddhist principle.

Ikeda (Toynbee and Ikeda 1976) argued, “Only by living in harmony with the natural environment in a give-and-take relation is it possible for man to develop his own life creatively” (38). He continued that a lack of interdependent harmony with nature and environment has resulted in a reversal in the power relation between human beings and nonhuman nature; it “is in some way related to natural disasters...I believe that deep within the causes of much of the climatic confusion that spawns so-called natural disasters is always a human element” (ibid: 44; see also Aitmatov and Ikeda 2009).

In the process of dialogically understanding the subjective particularities of the Other, we are further developed and renewed in a more complete version of ourselves. Ikeda (2001c) argued, “A truer, fuller sense of self is found in the totality of the psyche that is inextricably linked to ‘other’” (41):

If the twentieth century was one in which human beings violently destroyed the global environment like rapacious invaders, then maintaining communication and contact with nature are absolutely indispensable in the education of our children and young people who are to take responsibility for the twenty-first century. Just as with communication among humans, we must increase our opportunities to interact directly with nature rather than with the world of virtual reality. (ibid: 76)

Again, for Ikeda (2002b), this process of resisting abstraction through dialogic humanitarian competition, couched in esho funi, is firmly grounded in Makiguchian theory, which is even more relevant today than when first proposed:

Makiguchi fully foresaw the need for human beings to live in harmony with their environment. He predicted that none of the human sentiments such as compassion, goodwill, friendship, kindness, sincerity or simplicity could be realized to any appreciable degree without proper consideration for the natural environment, nor could human character be fully developed...Not only have we failed to maintain dialogue with nature, but we have sought to conquer and dominate nature, becoming a civilization whose greed drives it madly onward until it confronts a crisis of

environmental destruction that threatens the survival of the globe itself.  
(xxxv)

Such dialogic interaction among humans, culture and the environment prohibits us from abstracting the Other, whether it be other human beings, other cultures, or the natural environment. When we seek to value the subjectivities of the Other through dialogue, we thereby “concretize” them, which is the first step in humanitarian competition. From this place, in the concept of *esho funi*, when we engage in a win-win humanitarian competition, we foster self-betterment by working for the betterment of the Other—what Ikeda calls “creative coexistence.”

In the following sections I excerpt and chronologically review Ikeda’s UN peace and education proposals and dialogues in which he addresses humanistically competitive ways to resist the spirit of abstraction causing environmental and human degradation.

### **Ikeda’s UN Peace Proposals: A Chronological Review**

#### *1960s and 1970s*

As stated above, Ikeda does not use “humanitarian competition” until 1996, but this ethic of cooperation toward mutual excellence is evident in his proposals, initiatives, programs in and dialogues about environmental protection and sustainability as early as the 1960s when he called for international cooperation among nations—outside of economic, political and militaristic competition—to solve food shortages (1963). In 1974, Ikeda (2009) proposed the establishment of a world food bank because of concern that national interests were taking precedence over humanitarian concerns in response to global hunger and based on his conviction that life-sustaining commodities must not be politicized.

In 1978, Ikeda (2008b) proposed the creation of an “Environmental United Nations,” arguing that, “Developing an institutional framework that enables all states to engage with environmental issues will be of utmost importance, especially toward the widely acknowledged goal of establishing effective global environmental governance” (29; see also 1987b). This Environmental UN would involve all nations “pooling their brain power in study and research for the development of concrete policies to solve these [ecological] difficulties” (1987b). This proposal in many ways provided the foundation for his future UN proposals and initiatives in environmental protection and sustainability.

Related to this proposal, Ikeda argued the major key to creating an Environmental UN “must be the devising of ways to ensure not only harmony between man and nature, but also harmony, coexistence, and coprosperity among the nations of the world—especially between those of the North and South” (ibid: 80)—industrially developing and negatively affected by that development. He (1997) articulated this

North-South spirit of abstraction again in 1997 in the context of *esho funi* and yet again in his dialogue with French philosopher René Huyghe (Huyghe and Ikeda 2007):

These peoples [of Third World nations] are deeply dissatisfied with the excessively wide gap separating them from the industrialized nations, at whose hands they have endured deeply resented tyranny and selfishness. Far from being confined to North Africa, emotions of this kind are general and very widespread. Resentment greatly aggravates the difficulty of convincing the peoples of the Third World of the dangers they face if they fail to avoid the errors and mistakes already made by the industrialized West. No amount of preaching about harmony and cooperation with nature can be effective in the face of mistrust and existing differences in living standards. We must first strive to eliminate distrust by rectifying discrepancies between the Third World nations and the industrialized ones. Then, we must act sincerely to offer words of caution about the crisis. (71-72)

To that end, in 1978, Ikeda also proposed reparations: “All nations who have built their own prosperity on sacrifices, large or small, on the part of developing nations must pay for what they have done. I include Japan among the industrialized nations to whom I strongly address a plea for reparation” (ibid).

### *1980s*

In the early 1980s, Ikeda’s (1984a, 1986) consideration of environmental issues is particularly evident in his call for abolition of nuclear weapons when he argued, based on the Buddhist principle of *esho funi*, they cause destruction to the ecology. Also in the 1980s Ikeda critiqued consumerist greed as a cause of war and environmental destruction (Ikeda, 1984b), expanding such thinking to incorporate humanitarian cooperation in his dialogue with Club of Rome founding president Aurelio Peccei (Peccei and Ikeda 1984):

I believe that curbing the human desire for profit and fame could go a long way to decelerating the kind of emphasis on progress that today lays waste large stretches of our environment and therefore puts humanity itself in jeopardy. If this were achieved, it would next behoove us to establish as our primary goal consumption commensurate with Nature’s regenerative powers and a lasting life of happiness for us and all other life forms. (150)

Such consideration is expanded and articulated more explicitly in his 1987 peace proposal (1987b), in which he revisited his 1978 proposal for the creation of an Environmental UN, as well as introduced a proposal for a “United Nations Decade of Education for World Citizens,” which would include environmental issues connected with peace and human rights (see also Pauling and Ikeda 2009). He argued, “Harmony between humanity and nature should be the theme of education in relation to the environment. It is important to bring the most serious consideration to the extent to which nuclear explosions harm the ecosystem”

(1987b). In 1988 he expanded on this proposed Decade with a proposal for a “World Citizens’ Charter [to] be created as a base for the education of world citizens beyond the limitations of national identity. It would be a charter for peace education dealing comprehensively” (1988) with issues of human rights, peace and environmental issues (see also Ikeda 1989; Singh and Ikeda 1988).

### *1990s*

Applauding UNESCO’s initiatives in 1990, Ikeda proposed a UN Special Session of Education concerning environment, poverty, hunger and population growth. He also proposed the 1990s be designated as the Decade of World Citizens’ Education and that curriculum be created that embraced themes of urgent concern to humankind, including environment, development, peace and human rights. The book *Educating Citizens for Global Awareness* (Noddings 2005) arguably emanated from these proposals. In the book’s foreword Ikeda (2005a) argued,

The great wave of globalization sweeping contemporary society, in areas such as information and communications, science and technology, and the market economy, is a contrast of light and dark. The positive potentials are democratization and the spread of awareness of human rights; the negative aspects are war and conflict, rising economic disparities, the obliteration of distinctive cultures, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and the destruction of the global ecology...

Education, in the genuine sense of the word, holds the key to resolving these problems. Education has the power to enrich the inner landscape of the human spirit, to build within people’s hearts what the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) refers to as “the defenses of peace.” True education summons forth the innate goodness of humanity—our capacity for nonviolence, trust, and benevolence. It enables individuals to reveal their unique qualities and, by encouraging empathy with others, opens the door to the peaceful coexistence of humanity. This kind of humanistic education is crucial if we are to foster global citizens. (ix)

While he does not use such terminology in the 1990 peace proposal, Ikeda thereafter contextualized such education for global citizenship in Makiguchi’s concept of humanitarian competition (2005a).

In 1991, Ikeda argued the “common task of humanity [is] to protect our one and only Earth” (1991). To that end, he strengthened his initiatives in environmental sustainability by proposing an Environmental Security Council within the UN as part of his earlier vision for an Environmental UN. In preparation for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Ikeda argued,

Indeed, the threat to human life today consists not only of war or nuclear holocaust, but also of the destruction and deterioration of the earth’s environment. Protection of the global environment must be made one of

the top priorities of international politics, and the whole issue of security should be reappraised, incorporating environmental questions.

In view of the gravity of the environmental destruction underway on our planet, I have called for the establishment of an “Environmental United Nations.” As an important step toward that goal I propose that a second security council be set up to monitor and take charge of environmental problems. A United Nations conference on the environment and development will be held in Brazil next year, and UN efforts to grapple with environmental issues are now entering a decisive stage. Japan can make a significant contribution, befitting its economic strength, in the area of environmental protection. I am especially eager to see Japan exercise active leadership in realizing the establishment of an “Environmental Security Council,” a bold and courageous step that would help remedy its image as a nation of “economic animals.” (1991)

Not only is this an impressive proposal identifying the gravity of environmental instability before the Earth Summit, but it also evidences a consistent theme in Ikeda’s proposals, initiatives and programs—an increased cooperative role for Japan vis-à-vis environmental security. In 1992, Ikeda again urged Japan to take the lead in regional disarmament and the promotion of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies in the region.

Also in 1992, in addition to discussing environmental issues through the abovementioned lens of an abstract spirit, Ikeda delineated a series of proposals to reorganize the UN as environmental issues were not considered at its inception. Namely, in addition to revisiting the idea of an Environmental UN and the previous year’s proposed Environmental Security Council, which had, by 1992, received approval from Japan and other nations, Ikeda (1992) proposed the UN be divided into two strengthened independent bodies, one concerned with peacekeeping and the other concerned with global problems such as environment and human rights. He recommended the latter as a UN of Environment and Development with an Environment and Development Security Council, rather than as some reorganized form of the UN Economic and Social Council; he also provided an extensive plan for equitable membership. In the spirit of humanitarian competition, Ikeda argued that realization of such a UN of Environment and Development “depends upon whether or not each country is willing to give priority to the Earth’s interest—meaning the survival of the human race and this planet itself—over its own national interests. Each country must abandon its long-held belief in the primacy of national sovereignty and be prepared to transfer part of its authority to the international body” (1992).

Second and related, he proposed a “UN Disarmament Fund” whereby nations—in an ethic of humanitarian competition—defer portions of their defense budgets to the fund, which pools money for environmental protection and sustainable development. At the time of the 1992 proposal, the UN Environmental Programme operated on a meager 40 million dollars compared to the one trillion spent globally

on defense, but it required 125 billion per year to enact UN environmental initiatives; Ikeda's idea for an environmental fund that simultaneously cuts defense spending in an ethic of humanitarian competition is a powerful proposal warranting further consideration. Additionally, Ikeda (1992) argued that raising capital for environmental protection should not be left entirely to national governments, local governments, and other public agencies, but that here the role of NGOs could be expanded (see also Derbolav and Ikeda 1992).

In 1993, 1994 and 1995, Ikeda wrote less about environment than in previous years, but it remained a theme in his peace proposals. In 1993 he continued urging Japan to cooperate with the UN on issues of environment, poverty, population growth and hunger; in 1994, he proposed a UN Asian Office to deal with such issues as environmental concerns. In 1995, Ikeda again reiterated the environmental damage war causes. In 1996, Ikeda explicitly recommended humanitarian competition for the first time.

The year 1997 marks a dramatic increase in Ikeda's treatment of environment and sustainability in his UN peace proposals. Referencing the Club of Rome's 1972 report *The Limits of Growth*, Ikeda reiterated his call to rectify North-South disparities (1997). He also reiterated his proposal for creation of an Environment and Development Security Council to serve as a forum for internationally cooperative decision-making regarding urgent problems of the environment. He also proposed a global fund like that in conjunction with the Earth Summit to be held annually to procure funding for continued environmental protection. He stated, "This forum could be 'antennae of the people' channeling information from NGOs for the benefit of discussion at regular and special sessions of the UN General Assembly, to pool voices from grassroots, and to provide a certain overall direction toward the outcome of discussions" (1997).

The year 1997 also marks a turning point illustrating Ikeda's contribution to humanitarian contribution as a mutual striving for excellence among individuals in addition to nation-states. He noted as favorable the fact that NGOs and, thereby, individuals are taking a more active role in the UN; he further favorably noted that with such representation, the UN's character as a federation of sovereign states will fade. Ikeda discussed this idea earlier with Galtung (Galtung and Ikeda 1995) with respect to Galtung's proposal for a UN Peoples' Assembly. To this end, Ikeda voiced support for the Earth Charter, "the crystallization of a process of global dialogue" (Ikeda 2001), which he reiterated within a framework of humanitarian competition in 1999, 2001, 2002, 2006, 2008b, 2009 and in his dialogues with Henderson (Henderson and Ikeda 2004) and Swaminathan (Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005).

In 1998, Ikeda again called explicitly for humanitarian competition and proposed the free movement of people be secured at the People's Millennium Assembly in 2000, which would have provided smooth legal migration for the subsequently

dramatic increase of “environmental refugees,” who are currently not recognized in international law (Goulah in press).

*2000s*

In 2000, Ikeda (2000) again identified environmental degradation as a negative effect of unbridled globalization, and in 2001 he furthered his initiatives for Japan, urging the Japanese government to respond to emerging environmental challenges and chastising it for not considering environmental issues in its 2000 Constitutional research commission (see also Galtung and Ikeda 1995).

Ikeda’s numerous proposals and initiatives in 2002 again called explicitly for humanitarian competition and a dramatic reorganization of UN bodies and activities. In 2002, as stated above, Ikeda proposed the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which I discuss further below. In addition, within a framework of dialogic cooperation, Ikeda proposed a World Conference on Sustainable Development and a UN Special Session for a World Charter on Education. He proposed a UN high commissioner for environment to coordinate the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) (see also Ikeda 2008b), UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), which function under different mandates; he proposed the phased consolidation of the secretariats overseeing the implementation of the various environmental treaties and the establishment of a global green fund to alleviate problems arising from designation of different secretariats for each international treaty on the environment. He proposed a convention for the promotion of renewable energy envisioned within a framework of cooperation and dialogue.

In 2003, Ikeda proposed more concerted efforts in literacy education, alongside which is “growing awareness of the need for a new form of humanistic education, education that encourages creative coexistence with the natural environment and which fosters a culture of peace” (2003; see de Melo Silva 2000 for such efforts in Brazil). In 2004, Ikeda again articulated nature as the Other and stated that human security includes environmental security and sustainability.

In 2005, 13 years after the UN adopted the Framework Convention on Climate Change, Russia finally ratified the Kyoto Protocol, causing it to enter force. At such a time, Ikeda reflected on his past initiatives and Makiguchi’s prescience in indentifying and advocating a dialogic interaction between humans and nature. Ikeda advocated society take a more personal perspective of nature through dialogic interaction. He also proposed a greater role for the UN Economic and Social Council to fight against poverty and manage the effects of globalization, such as environmental degradation (2005c). He also revisited his 1994 proposal to create a UN Asian Office by proposing a UN Asia-Pacific Office, including such countries as Australia and Canada. In a related theme, he urged increased cooperative integration of Asia in such issues, noting UN University in Japan, which focuses on environment and sustainability (ibid).

In 2006, Ikeda articulated environmental issues as a *raison d'être* of humanitarian competition, again referring to his proposal for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and considering *esho funi* as a principle that can help resolve the environmental crisis. Also in 2006, Ikeda engaged in dialogue with Wangari Maathai in Japan and proposed that Japan create a successor framework to the Kyoto Protocol:

As the country that, as host, made a significant contribution to the completion of the Kyoto Protocol, I believe Japan has a special role to play in developing a successor framework. It can no doubt be most effective in this by working with countries with a strong commitment to environmental issues. (Ikeda 2006: 24)

In 2007, Ikeda called for the creation of an East Asian environment and development organization as a pilot model of regional cooperation and the kernel for the eventual creation of an East Asian Union.

In 2008, Ikeda, again reflecting on the state of the world and certain advances in combating climate change and environmental degradation, reiterated his numerous and substantive past proposals and initiatives (e.g., UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Environmental UN, establishment of UN High Commissioner for Environmental Issues) couched in an ethic of cooperation, or humanitarian competition. To this end he urged nations negotiating responses to climate change held under the Bali Roadmap to “break away from the negative approach of minimizing national obligations and burdens and instead adopt a positive focus on the achievement of larger, global objectives...In this way, I hope they will engage in positively oriented competition [a humanitarian competition] aimed at making the greatest contribution to the resolution of this planetary crisis” (Ikeda 2008b: 30-31).

Also in 2008, Ikeda proposed, “the establishment of a world fund for water for life as a step toward securing the kind of funding and focused strategies that will ensure the rapid amelioration of conditions that continue to threaten the dignity of so many people” (ibid: 38). He also advocated strengthening and upgrading the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) to the “status of a specialized agency, a world environmental organization” (Ikeda 2008b: 29; see also Ikeda 2002c). A similar vision underlay his call in 1978 for the creation of an Environmental UN (1987a).

Additionally, with a firm understanding of the growing influence individuals and NGOs have within the UN, which he first articulated in 1978 (1987a) and again in 1997, Ikeda (2008b) stated,

I would wish that [the East Asian youth exchange initiated in 2007 by the Japanese government] to deepen understanding and friendship will also be a chance for the young people of the region to develop a shared sense of

awareness and responsibility for the future. I would propose, for example, that opportunities be created to meet and talk with the staff of UN agencies and to learn from the environmental and disarmament programs promoted by the UN. (48)

Most recently, in 2009, Ikeda proposed “that in the future an international sustainable energy agency be created under the aegis of the UN to further the work of [the IRENA and IPEEC] so that international cooperation on energy policy may take firm and universal root throughout the global community” (31).

Ikeda’s abovementioned proposals in environmental protection, sustainable development and ecological consciousness from the 1960s to the present envision and actualize international humanitarian competition as a resistance to the spirit of abstraction that has caused decades of environmental and human degradation. These proposals also provide a framework for Ikeda’s similarly envisioned applications in education. As he articulated:

In addition to “top-down” reform through institutional reframing, it is crucial to encourage “bottom-up” change by broadening grassroots engagement and empowering people toward collective action. This conviction underpinned my call for a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. I believe strongly in the power of learning. Empowerment through learning brings out the unlimited potentials of individuals and consequently creates currents, first within the respective regions, and eventually globally across borders, that can fundamentally transform the world in which we live. (Ikeda 2008b: 32)

In the following section I briefly examine Ikeda’s application of humanitarian competition in the “bottom-up” context of his proposals and initiatives in education for environmental protection and sustainable development. Specifically, I examine its application first in the context of Soka University of America, which Ikeda founded, and, second, in his proposal for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

### **Ikeda’s Environmental Education Programs**

Ikeda’s commitment to peace through environmentalism and sustainability lies in his uncompromising faith in people’s limitless potential to engage in a transformative “human revolution” through internal and external practices, whereby the former involves spiritual transformation in accord with Buddhist principles and the latter involves secular education:

When the human revolution is achieved in the inner and outer beings of more and more people, human relations and relations between man and Nature will be more harmonious. This will provide a reliable basis for the solution of the grave problems—environmental pollution, war, exhaustion of natural resources and so on—facing humankind now. (Peccei and Ikeda 1984: 108)

This conviction has driven Ikeda to proclaim education as the culminating undertaking of his life (Ikeda 2005b, 2007a), and his initiatives, proposals and programs in environmental education and education for sustainable development, therefore, fall under the broader approach to education he calls *ningen kyoiku*. Literally “human education,” *ningen kyoiku* is Ikeda’s vision for fostering global citizenship and creative coexistence; it is education in the nurturing relationship between teacher and student that empowers ordinary individuals to transform their beliefs and behavior and create value toward personal and social—and, thereby, environmental—benefit (e.g., Ikeda 2001c, 2006b).

Ikeda (Díez-Hochleitner and Ikeda 2008) argues:

Although time consuming, education is the foundation for all reforms. To the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in South Africa in August 2002, I proposed that we build a sustainable future through the power of broad-based education on protecting the environment. I also suggested that the Earth Charter be enthusiastically used as material for education on the environment in schools and elsewhere.

Saving the environment requires a global revolution that must start with individual human revolutions. That is the road to the solution of the complex of worldwide problems. (39)

This intersection of human education and environmental coexistence is present in practice at Soka University of America, which I discuss next.

*Soka University Guidelines: Path to Planetary Citizenship*

As founder, Ikeda established the founding guidelines for Soka University of America: Foster leaders of culture in the community, Foster leaders of humanism in society, Foster leaders of pacifism in the world, Foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity (e.g., Henderson and Ikeda 2004; Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005). Henderson (Henderson and Ikeda 2004) noted that, “The ‘creative coexistence of nature and humanity’ summarizes the environmental curriculum necessary for future generations” (152). Ikeda (2001c) further articulated this vision,

If we are to build a society that serves the essential needs of education in the twenty-first century, we must not become divided or isolated. Rather, we must deepen human bonds that transcend differences of race and nationality and also be in free and full communication with nature. We must give the highest priority to

cultivating in young people the strength of character and values that will enable them to take the lead in building a world of creative coexistence. (77)

To that end, Ikeda argued, “In the years to come, environmental issues must be a primary aspect of education. We must teach the importance of life and relations between humanity and the environment from the still profounder dimension of the great universal force of life and the cosmos” (Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005: 76). Such cultivation results, in Ikeda’s view, in global or planetary citizenship.

In specific terms, how does Ikeda encourage global or planetary citizenship? He (Henderson and Ikeda 2004) stated that by global citizen he does not mean “polyglots who fly all over the world conducting important business” (77). Rather, he envisions globally minded people such as Mahatma Gandhi and Paulo Freire who work for their own happiness and the happiness of others in their hometowns and local communities (ibid). According to Ikeda, the answer to true education for global citizenship lies in Makiguchi’s argument that global citizenship exists at three levels—the local community, national community and global community (e.g., Ikeda 2002a, 2005a, 2008b; Henderson and Ikeda 2004; Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005; see also Makiguchi 1981-88; cf. Bethel 2002). He continued, “Makiguchi rejected both narrow-minded nationalism and the kind of globalism that lacks concrete content. He stressed that the education of global citizens must start at the level of the local community, extending outward from there” (2005a: x). Thus, Ikeda argued,

...the character of a global citizen is creative through a dynamic harmonization and development of these three levels. As the individual grows, the sphere of what that individual experiences as her or his local community expands to a national and then global scale. Thus, humanitarian contributions to one’s community and country further the cause of world peace; at the same time, contributions to global humanity on a planetary level reverberate back to the national and local levels. (ibid)

In other words, such actions as being a good neighbor and a good citizen both at home and internationally or coping in practical ways with environmental problems specific to one’s local region are examples of such global citizenship (Henderson and Ikeda 2004; Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005). Soka University of America, then, seeks to foster leaders of such global citizenship. Moreover, it was this educational vision that undergirded Ikeda’s proposal in 2002 for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which I discuss next.

#### *UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development*

Ikeda (2002a) argued that, “Nothing is more crucially important today than the kind of humanistic education that enables people to sense the reality of interconnectedness, to appreciate the infinite potential in each person’s life, and to cultivate that dormant human potential to its fullest” (7); in proposing the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Ikeda argued that

environmental education, like peace education and human rights education, must be at the heart of such humanistic education for creative coexistence. In his Decade proposal, Ikeda (2002a) stated, “The objectives of the decade would be to promote education as the basis for sustainable human society and to strengthen international cooperation toward the dissemination of environmental information...” (2). At the heart of this, he concluded, is sustainability.

Ikeda’s (2002a) proposal of education for sustainable development promotes three curricular goals, which hinge on humanitarian competition: to learn and deepen awareness of environmental issues and realities, to reflect on our modes of living, renewing these toward sustainability, and to empower people to take concrete action to resolve the challenges we face. For Ikeda the Earth Charter is instrumental in effecting this tripartite vision for the Decade (2002a). Ikeda has long supported the Earth Charter, arguing that educators “must also prepare easy-to-understand, appealing pamphlets presenting the Charter’s environmental message to children. Young people are responsible for the future. We must achieve international consensus about devoting energy to youth-oriented environmental education. The Earth Charter is an excellent starting point for such a program” (Henderson and Ikeda 2004: 130-31; see also Ikeda 2002c).

Because of Ikeda’s ardent support of the Earth Charter, SGI organizations, members and affiliated peace research institutes have organized symposia and publications that offered multifaceted input into the Charter drafting process (2002c; Henderson and Ikeda 2004), sponsored a series of Earth Charter consultations, resulting in publication of “Women’s Views on the Earth Charter” and “Buddhist Perspectives on the Earth Charter” (Ikeda 2001b), and have “worked with the Earth Council and other organizations to support the translation of the Earth Charter into various languages and the development of pamphlets, videos and other materials that will publicize its ideas” (Ikeda 2002c). They have also established the Amazon Ecological Research Center (AERC), run by SGI-Brazil in Cupertino together with the Soka University Ecological Research Centre and other institutions, whose reforestation program for the Amazon rainforest has so far planted 20,000 seedlings of 60 different tree species on 53 hectares of land.

In addition, since 2002, the SGI has held the exhibition ‘Seeds of Change: The Earth Charter and Human Potential,’ developed in collaboration with the Earth Charter Initiative, in twenty countries and eight languages” (2009: 31), and the SGI exhibition “Symbiosis and Hope: The Amazon—Its Environment and Peace” has been shown in Brazil, Peru, Costa Rica, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela, Paraguay and Bolivia (Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005: 67; see also Ikeda 2001c; de Athayde and Ikeda 2009); the exhibition “Ecology and Human Life” has been shown throughout the U.S. and “EcoAid” in Japan (Ikeda 2002c). Finally, the SGI exhibition “Toward a Century of Hope: Environment and Development” was an official side event at the Rio Earth Summit. Such initiatives within and by the SGI

affiliate organizations have helped to promote the Earth Charter and advance the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development currently in effect.

Finally, an additional component of Ikeda's proposal for a UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is his long-held vision for a UN of Education, a forum for educational policy administrators and teachers to exchange ideas, experiences and best practices. In his UN Decade proposal, Ikeda (2002a) suggested that the commencement of the Decade would have been an ideal opportunity to organize such a world summit of educators. It warrants noting that Ikeda's idea for a UN of Education in conjunction with the Decade was couched in his similarly long-held conviction that education should occupy a fourth and separate branch of government; for only when education is free from political, economic and militaristic competition, Ikeda argued, will it fully address environmental issues, sustainability, human rights and happiness (e.g., Ikeda 1987a, 2001c).

## **Conclusion**

Through thorough review of Daisaku Ikeda's annual UN peace proposals, education proposals and dialogues, this article attempted to introduce for the first time in academic literature Ikeda's ethics of environmental protection, sustainable development and the cultivation of ecological consciousness as nodal points of peace, social justice and human dignity. I presented these ethics through the theoretical lens of the Buddhist principle of *esho funi* and humanitarian competition as resistance models to the spirit of abstraction at the root of war, environmental degradation and global climate change. While Ikeda's extensive and consistent efforts in these areas have not been discussed in extant literature, they have arguably brought awareness to and cultivated grassroots action among the SGI's 12 million members in 192 countries, its affiliate institutions, students in the Soka schools Ikeda founded, and numerous others beyond the scope of the SGI. This article is intended to be introductory and, thereby, aims to begin discussions about empirical examination, application and implementation of Ikeda's ideas for peace, policy, practice and education in environmental protection, sustainable development, and an ecological consciousness to "shade and protect Earth with 'leaves of language' arising from the depths of life" (Ikeda 2008a: 55-56).

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