

**PERSPECTIVE: The Deeper Meaning**  
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*You play with my world  
like it's your own little toy.*  
— Bob Dylan

I had that dream again. The one where all the nuclear weapons are fired, and we are thrown into hell. The beautiful blue sky is replaced by a deathlike gray. All the Earth's beautiful colors are muted.

Immediately I start planning: Where to get more water? I envision stores full of panicked people. What about gasoline? Where can I grow food?

*You've thrown the worst fear that can ever be hurled / The fear to bring children into this world.*

The dream started when I was a small boy. At school, the teachers told us that we had to get under our desks when the siren went off. That meant the Russians were going to bomb us. When I was outside playing and a plane flew overhead, my whole body froze. Was this the plane that spewed its poison? Well, the dream hasn't gone away. The bombs are still there, but we don't talk about them much anymore.

Maybe we should.

*A world war can be won / You want us to believe.*

Who are these people that build the bombs? Some of them are our neighbors. Don't they know that we are all connected? You can't hurt someone else without hurting yourself. This country will pay dearly for building these weapons, and it has already started. In Washington state we have Hanford, where nuclear waste is leaking into the Columbia River. And, thanks to the Bangor submarine base, our state has more nuclear weapons than almost any country in the world.

*Even Jesus would never forgive what you do.*

Josei Toda, second president of the Soka Gakkai, called those who used nuclear weapons devils. I feel the same. I am enraged to be disturbed by dreams of nuclear destruction. I am tormented that my taxes feed a war machine. I am in grief when memories of the dead wash over me.

My dream reminded me why I practice this Buddhism. It is because as a small boy my soul was shaken to its core by threats of destruction, and as a young man I was told to go to war.

*All the money you earn will never buy back your soul.*

What did presidents Makiguchi and Toda fight so hard for? It wasn't for personal gain. It was to stop war. Forever.

When I was younger, every day was a battle. Now I have achieved some success in life, but at times I feel that I am not really making a difference. Fortunately, I have enough trust

in this practice to know that I am exactly where I need to be. I want to help make a world where children no longer grow up in fear. It is possible. It's not some dream.

And the step to take is to follow the most important guideline in Buddhism: "The real meaning of the Lord Shakyamuni Buddha's appearance in this world lay in his behavior as a human being. How profound" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 240).

Yes, how profound.

**WT**

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