

DECLARATION TOWARD A NUCLEAR-FREE AGE DR. DAVID KRIEGER

Dr. David Krieger is the president and founding member of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, established in 1982 and based in Santa Barbara, California. The NAPF promotes and supports new ways of thinking and acting that increase the possibilities for peace. They offer research information, educational programs and policy-making guidance on the issues of peace and global survival. You can get more information on the foundation by visiting their website at www.wagingpeace.org.

In March 2000, the NAPF presented SGI President Daisaku Ikeda with its 1999 World Citizenship Award. Several days later, the Soka Gakkai Hiroshima Peace Award was presented to Dr. Krieger for his efforts in spreading the seeds of peace throughout the world.

He was interviewed for Living Buddhism by Debbie Belardino, who has been a member of the SGI for fourteen years. She began her practice in Santa Barbara, California. She currently lives in Japan and works as a freelance writer; she has written articles on Japanese arts and culture for The Japan Times and other magazines and newspapers in Japan, the United States, Hong Kong and Canada.

“We are standing at a nuclear crossroads. More than ten years have passed since the end of the Cold War, and yet there have been no dramatic changes in the security policies of the nuclear weapons states. These countries are continuing to rely upon their nuclear weapons to provide for their security.

They still rely upon the theory of nuclear deterrence, a theory with many problems. On the other hand, opposition to nuclear arms is growing throughout the world. If the nuclear weapons states persist in holding on indefinitely to the status quo, we will continue to face total annihilation from nuclear weapons. Therefore, Josei Toda’s ‘Declaration for the Prohibition of Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs’ remains of the utmost importance. I am reassured that SGI President Ikeda is making strong efforts for the SGI youth to inherit the thought and passion of Josei Toda for the abolition of nuclear weapons.”

— Dr. David Krieger, from *Choose Hope*, a soon-to-be published dialogue between SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

A DECLARATION FOR THE AGES BY DEBBIE BELARDINO

Josei Toda’s speech, “Declaration for the Prohibition of Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs,” is said to be the Soka Gakkai’s “eternal starting point for world peace,” and the basis of the SGI’s worldwide efforts for peace. Given about a year before his death, it remains relevant today.

On September 8, 1957, 50,000 youth gathered at Mitsuzawa Stadium in Yokohama for a sports festival. Typhoon No. 10 had been making its way from eastern Japan and heavy storms and rain were forecast for that day. Yet September 8 shone bright and clear. “There wasn’t a cloud in the sky,” says Kayoko Tatenuma, who was eighteen at the time, “although it had been raining cats and dogs the day before.”

Mr. Toda stated: “Today’s ‘Festival of Youth’ has been blessed with clear, sunny skies free of any trace of yesterday’s storm, as if the heavens themselves have responded to your enthusiasm. With a profound sense of joy, I watched the competitors among you give full play to the Soka Gakkai spirit in each event, as the rest of you wholeheartedly applauded their efforts.”

“President Toda was full of life,” says Ms. Tatenuma. “His attitude toward nuclear weapons testing and toward the atomic and hydrogen bomb deeply affected us.”

“We, the citizens of the world, have an inviolable right to live. Anyone who tries to jeopardize this right is a devil incarnate, a Satan, a monster. I propose that humankind apply, in every case, the death penalty to anyone responsible for using nuclear weapons, even if that person is on the winning side” (*Seikyo Times*, May 1993, p. 60).

Using words such as devil and monster, President Toda depicts those who use nuclear weapons as something inhuman, something that does not belong in “this society of human beings.”

“I believe that it is the mission of every member of the youth division in Japan to disseminate this idea throughout the globe” (p. 62).

An editorial from the September 8, 1998, issue of the Soka Gakkai’s newspaper, *Seikyo Shimbun*, titled, “The Road to the Total Extinction of Nuclear Weapons,” states: “It is said that the reason why we don’t make progress in the reduction of nuclear weapons is that the theory of nuclear deterrence justifies the holding of nuclear weapons from the premise of the fear of human beings. It is disgraceful egoism itself that one tries to rule another by fear of destruction with each other. President Toda saw through this point to its essence, ‘as the life of the devil nature that lies in human beings.’ It is only through the power of the Buddha nature that one can overcome the power of the devil nature.”

In other words, deep within us are the claws of the devil nature. We expose these hidden claws by justifying the use of nuclear weapons — valuing something other than life itself. President Toda’s wish was to eradicate these claws of the devil nature by deeply instilling in the minds of the people around the world the idea that nothing is more important than life.

In the twentieth century, the human race attempted all kinds of revolutions, but never a human revolution. This is a basic concept but it has never been done. At the core of human revolution are our rights as human beings to live, meaning that no value can be created based on the killing of human beings. Until now, other revolutions have been based on thought systems other than the idea that nothing is more important than life.

Wars have been justified in “the name of something,” or “for the sake of something,” for example “in the name of religion,” “in the name of ethnic cleansing,” “for the sake of national defense” or “for the sake of national security.” President Toda’s declaration slashed through such rhetoric to the fundamental level of life. He insisted that we should first think about the profits of human beings before the profits of nations. During World War II, the Japanese military enforced the policy that the nation was more important than the lives of the people. Successive Soka Gakkai Presidents Makiguchi and Toda fought this view. Truly, the way to make the twenty-first century a “century of life” is to instill in the minds of the people around the world that nothing is more important than life itself.

President Ikeda states: “It is my conviction that we must make the twenty-first century a Century of Life. Humankind must focus its attention on the ultimate frontier, that of life itself. We must learn to pull from the depths of our beings that awesome spiritual strength that is greater even than the power of nuclear weapons” (*World Tribune*, October 15, 1999, p. 4).

How can we, as SGI members, meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and of the nuclear age, where nuclear weapons loom ever deadly on the horizon? To inherit the spirit of

Josei Toda, and not begrudge our lives in the fight against nuclear weapons. Indeed, this is the challenge of the twenty-first century, and the very mission of the SGI.

An interview with Dr. David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation follows.

Living Buddhism: What would you say is the essential spirit of Josei Toda’s declaration?

Dr. David Krieger: I think the essential spirit of President Toda’s declaration was passion and hope. His passion was rooted in anger for those who would threaten to use instruments as evil as nuclear weapons — weapons capable of destroying whole cities, perhaps destroying even humanity itself. His hope was in the youth. His last great request of the youth was to stand up to the evil of nuclear weapons, and rid the world of these terrible instruments of annihilation. He didn’t turn to the adults to do this; he turned to the youth. Today, we live in societies that lack passion, even passion to confront evil. I believe that Mr. Toda was right to approach the evil of nuclear arms with passion, and also right to call upon youth to rise up and express their own passion to confront this terrible danger to humanity.

LB: Up until now, the SGI and NAPF have shared a “partnership in peace” toward the goal of the abolition of nuclear weapons. In what ways do you think we can further strengthen our partnership in the twenty-first century, especially with respect to the role that youth will play?

Krieger: Last fall, when I spoke at the local SGI branch in Santa Barbara, California, I suggested that we need to work together for a movement in the United States that is as strong as the movement in Japan for the abolition of nuclear weapons. In Japan, the youth were able to gather more than 13 million signatures for abolition in a relatively short time. Proportionate to the populations of the two countries, 13 million signatures in Japan would mean some 26 million in the United States. For many reasons, this will be a greater challenge in the United States, but it is a challenge that we must accept. We have prepared an “Appeal to End the Nuclear Weapons Threat to Humanity.” It has been signed by some of the world’s great peace leaders, including thirty-seven Nobel Laureates of whom fourteen are Nobel Peace Laureates and SGI President Ikeda is one of the signers. My proposal is that we form a “partnership of peace” to gather 26 million signatures on this appeal in the United States in order to convince the government to become a leader in the global effort to eliminate nuclear weapons. Of course, I would see youth playing a leading role in making this happen.

LB: In *Choose Hope*, you discuss the problem of violence in high schools and remark that “the NAPF, based upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has commenced preparation for an obligatory curriculum concerning human rights for use in high schools.” Could you please comment on this in more detail?

Krieger: We have prepared a curriculum on human rights and responsibilities based upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Of course, we cannot make the curriculum obligatory, but I would like it to be. Most young people, and older people as well, do not even know the Universal Declaration exists. Everyone in the world needs to know about this important document containing basic rights for all members of the human family — and particularly young people need to know that they have certain rights just by virtue of being born. It is not enough, though, to have rights. For those rights to be effective, we must also share

responsibilities. Rights can only exist when there are strong responsibilities to assure those rights. I believe that high school students should have the opportunity to study the Universal Declaration, and learn the full extent of their rights and responsibilities.

LB: In “Waging Peace II,” you discuss the idea of “Earth Citizenship,” and state, “as Earth Citizens we have both rights and responsibilities...our most basic responsibility is to do our part to assure the survival of life on our planet and to be a positive link between the past and future,” and state that it will be necessary to do different things, such as “adopt a global perspective,” “become educated about the dangers and threats to the earth...” This is right on line with the SGI’s movement toward global citizenship. However, the average person in daily life tends to become bogged down by day-to-day concerns. What can we do in our daily lives to raise our consciousness about nuclear weapons and become global citizens?

Krieger: You are right that most people become busy in their daily lives and often do not think about the bigger picture. I believe that changing this situation requires education, both in and out of school. If we are to survive as a species, we need to adopt a global perspective and become global citizens. In the nuclear age we are still in, national borders can no longer guarantee security. All borders are permeable. No country’s borders can protect against ideas, information, pollution, disease and certainly not against missiles or even terrorists. We need to accept a simple truth: for better or worse, the world is one. Since our problems have become global, so must our solutions be global. The sooner we accept this reality, the sooner we will be able to get on with solving the world’s great problems such as the threat of nuclear arms, global warming, damage to the ozone layer, poverty, starvation, disease, illiteracy and many more. I believe that we are all citizens of Earth by virtue of being born here. As Earth citizens, we have responsibilities to take care of our planet and each other. We must build systems of peace and make war an institution of the past if we are to survive. We must build down the world’s nuclear arsenals with the goal of eliminating these weapons forever. The answer lies in education, education and more education. This education must come largely from groups like SGI and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, organizations committed to a better future for humanity.

DECLARATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF ATOMIC AND HYDROGEN BOMBS FROM THE HUMAN REVOLUTION

President Ikeda writes about the event where Josei Toda made his Declaration for the Prohibition of Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs to an audience of 50,000 youth in his novel, The Human Revolution. The following excerpt is from volume 12 and first appeared in the July 1993 issue of Seikyo Times.

Standing before the microphone with calm assurance, he [Toda] began powerfully: “Today’s ‘Festival of Youth’ has been blessed with clear, sunny skies free of any trace of yesterday’s storm, as if the heavens themselves have responded to your enthusiasm. With a profound sense of joy, I watched the competitors among you give full play to the Soka Gakkai spirit in each event, as the rest of you wholeheartedly applauded their efforts.

“Nevertheless, for all the joy I feel today, it is inevitable that the Soka Gakkai will encounter persecution again. I am also fully prepared to meet any attack that comes my way personally. Having said that, I would now like to share with you what I hope you will regard as the first of

my final instructions for the future.”

The 50,000-plus crowd listened with renewed attentiveness at Toda’s unexpected words. Hearing the words final instructions, Toda’s disciples sensed that something quite serious was at hand. Moreover, his reference to “what I hope you will regard as the first of my final instructions for the future” had followed his prediction of persecution and attacks.

Now, as the “Festival of Youth” was coming to a close, the euphoric atmosphere suddenly turned serious as the crowd wondered with anticipation just what Toda’s final instructions would be.

“As I have long said,” he continued, “youth will shoulder the responsibility for the coming era. There is no need for me to tell you that kosen-rufu is our mission. We must achieve it without fail. But today I would like to state clearly my feelings and attitude regarding the testing of nuclear weapons, a subject of heated debate in the world today.

“I hope that, as my disciples, you will inherit the declaration I am about to make today and, to the best of your ability, carry its message throughout the world.”

At this point, the only thing that those listening could tell was that he was going to speak about nuclear weapons. Certainly, all bore deep fears and misgivings about the repeated nuclear testing of recent years, yet many of the members simply felt it was enough to give first priority to establishing a “Buddha land,” in view of their mission to achieve kosen-rufu. The vast majority were convinced that once such a Buddha land was established, there would be no reason for nuclear weapons to exist.

However, kosen-rufu was still a long way off, and many keenly recognized that, as they proceeded toward this lofty goal, the threat of nuclear weapons was growing stronger with each passing day. Some were also haunted by the hideous notion that the path toward kosen-rufu would be obliterated in an instant if nuclear weapons actually came to be used. The memory of the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki strengthened this ominous sense of foreboding all the more.

It was difficult for Soka Gakkai members to avoid the issue of nuclear weapons. Yet by its very nature, it defied their comprehension. Filled with a vague sense of fear and unease, they were still striving to come to grips with the problem.

Toda was now about to make a declaration concerning this subject, clarifying his stance on nuclear arms and nuclear testing. Further, he had asked those present to carry on the spirit of this declaration, the first of his final instructions to them, and to disseminate that spirit throughout the world.

Toda was resolute. His words, infused with a powerful intensity, resounded clearly through the stadium.

“Although a movement to ban the testing of nuclear weapons is now under way around the world, it is my wish to attack the problem at its root, that is, to rip out the claws hidden in the very depths of this issue. I therefore advocate that those who use nuclear weapons, from whatever country, whether victorious or defeated, 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 tries to jeopardize this right is a devil incarnate, a Satan, a monster. I propose that humankind apply, in every case, the death penalty to anyone responsible for using nuclear weapons, even if that person is on the winning side.”

Josei Toda viewed nuclear weapons as the most devilish contrivance of modern times. Devil refers to any workings or functions — earthly desires and illusion, for example — that torment the human heart and mind. The Chinese character for devil, *ma*, also connotes “murderer,” “robber of life,” or “destroyer.” One might say that the function of devils is to confound the

human mind, to sap people's life force and to destroy life itself.

In Buddhism, the epitome of such devilishness is personified as the "Devil of the Sixth Heaven." Another name for this devil is Takejizaiten, which literally means "the king who makes free use of the fruits of others' efforts for his own pleasure," indicating one who desires to subjugate and control others.

In this light, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, which plays upon people's fears to justify the maintenance of nuclear arsenals capable of mass annihilation, is itself a manifest function of the Devil of the Sixth Heaven.

A unique attribute of Toda's declaration against nuclear weapons was its call for the destruction of this devilish nature lurking deep within the lives of human beings. At that time, a popular movement to ban nuclear weapons was spreading even in Japan. Nevertheless, Toda thought it urgently necessary to establish the view that nuclear weapons are devilish creations, an absolute evil whose very existence should be rejected. Without this, he concluded, it would be impossible to root out the devil that lurks behind the very existence of nuclear weapons.

His stance was that nuclear weapons and their use must be absolutely condemned, not from the standpoint of ideology, nationalism or ethnic identity, but instead from the universal dimension of humanity. Herein lies the greatness of Toda's declaration against nuclear weapons. It is also the reason why his declaration would shine ever more brilliantly through the years.

In his declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, Josei Toda had proposed the death penalty, without exception, for those using nuclear bombs. This in no way, however, meant that he was affirming or advocating the death penalty as a general means of punishment.

Nine years earlier, in 1948, seven so-called "Class-A" war criminals, including wartime prime minister Hideki Tojo, were sentenced to death by hanging by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (in a proceeding commonly known as the Tokyo Trial). On that occasion, Toda had made the following statement: "The death penalty is absolutely wrong. Life imprisonment would have been more appropriate. Besides, those who dropped the atomic bombs are as guilty as [those sentenced to death in the Tokyo Trial]. I say this because, when viewed from the perspective of Buddhism, the death penalty, which is the killing of one person by another, can never be condoned."

Further, Toda had often said that in Buddhism there is no concept whereby one person judges another. Why, then, did Toda go so far as to use the words death penalty in his declaration?

Here, Toda was not advocating that legislation be introduced to authorize the death penalty for those who use nuclear weapons. Rather, his aim, quite simply, was to establish the idea that the use of nuclear weapons, an act that would deny humanity -its fundamental right to exist, must be judged as an absolute evil. He hoped that by allowing this idea to penetrate deeply into the hearts and minds of people throughout the world, particularly the leaders, it might serve as an internal restraint against the use of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, based on the perspective that the crime of committing such an absolute evil was deserving of the highest punishment, then it was inconceivable that anything short of the death penalty could possibly fit the crime.

Had Toda simply been satisfied to brand those who used nuclear bombs as devils, Satans and monsters, his declaration would have remained abstract. Most certainly, he could not have adequately conveyed his conviction that the use of nuclear weapons constituted an absolute evil. Toda's bold call for the death penalty was meant to crush the tendency within people's minds to justify the use of nuclear bombs. In a way, he was passing a sentence of death on the

devilish tendencies dwelling within human life itself.

Toda had made his declaration at the height of the Cold War between East and West. The vast majority of assertions about nuclear weapons made during this time were based upon the ideology of one side or the other. Toda's declaration, however, was a radical departure from this way of thinking; it judged nuclear weapons as an evil from the most fundamental level of humanity.

Toda's voice grew more powerful.

"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.

"I shall end by expressing my eager expectation for you to spread my declaration to the entire world with the powerful spirit you have shown in today's sports festival.

As Toda brought his speech to a close, a great surge of applause rose from the crowd, and a whirlpool of profound sentiment enveloped the stadium.

Currently, the United States nuclear arsenal includes 5,400 warheads loaded on intercontinental ballistic missiles at land and sea; 1,750 nuclear bombs and cruise missiles ready to be launched from B-2 and B-52 bombers; 1,670 nuclear weapons classified as tactical; and about 10,000 nuclear warheads held in bunkers around the country.

Source: Newsweek magazine, June 25, 2001, p. 28.