

# The Philosophy of Soka Education and ‘Human Revolution’

*Mikael Aktor*



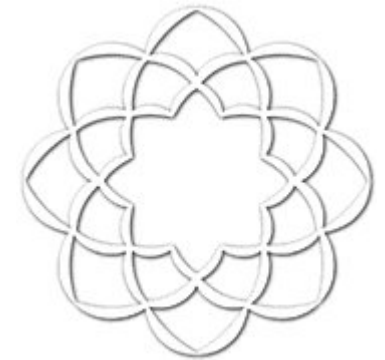
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN DENMARK

Institute for Philosophy, Education and the Study of Religions

Mikael Aktor, Fixed-term lecturer, PhD

# SGI – A Buddhist Peace Organization

- **What are the relations between its Buddhist roots and its peace activities?**
- **Historical-doctrinal relations: The World as a ‘Buddha Land’**
- **Practice relations: ‘Human Revolution’ and Peace**
- **The Soka School System: Creating ‘Global Citizens’**
- **The Peace Activities: Peace through global dialogue**



# Basic Early Buddhist Teachings

- **Existence**

The "Three Marks":  
imperfection, impermanence,  
non-essentialism.

- **Interdependence**

Everything arise in interdependence.

- **Cause and effect**

Acts have unavoidable consequences  
for oneself and for others.

- **Enlightenment**

Spiritual life through respect of others' life, compassion, non-violence, and cultivation of mind.



# Mahāyāna – The Universal Vehicle

- **Democratization**
  - ▶ Buddhism from monasteries to society
- **Media revolution**
  - ▶ Alphabetization, communication





# The Foundations

- **The Lotus Sutra**

- ▶ Northern India (?), 1. century.



- **Tiantai / Tendai**

- ▶ China, 6.-7. cent..
- ▶ Japan 8.-11. cent.



- **Nichiren**

- ▶ Japan, 1222-1282



# Buddha's "Pure Land"

## Hōnen

Buddha's Pure Land is a paradise to be reached after death.



## Nichiren

Buddha's Pure Land is in this world.



# Soka Gakkai's Three Presidents

- **Tsunesaburo Makiguchi**  
(1871-1944)  
Founder, antinationalist, and antimilitarist.
- **Josei Toda**  
(1900-1958)  
Reorganization,  
social and political outreach.
- **Daisaku Ikeda**  
(1928-)  
Internationalization.



# 'Human Revolution'

- **Dual engagement**

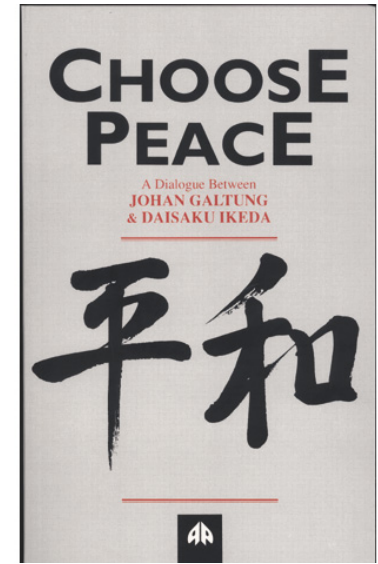
- ▶ From the world to the mind
- ▶ From the mind to the world

- **From the world to the mind**

- ▶ Peace activities, cultural activities, educational activities.

- **From the mind to the world**

- ▶ Study, chanting, dialogue.





# The Soka School System

## ■ Institutions

- ▶ Soka University, Tokyo; Soka University of America; System of primary schools, junior and senior high schools in Japan; kindergartens in Singapore and Hong Kong

## ■ Principles

- ▶ The wisdom to perceive the *interconnectedness* of all life;
- ▶ the courage to *respect*, to strive to understand, and to grow from encounters with people of different cultures;
- ▶ the *compassion* to maintain empathy that extends to those suffering in distant places.



# SGI Peace Activities

## ■ Institutions

- ▶ Boston Research Center for the 21st Century;
- ▶ Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research.



## ■ Grass root level

- ▶ Exhibitions, conferences, extensive co-operation with established peace organizations.

## ■ Political level

- ▶ NGO activities in the UN system.
- ▶ Ikeda's annual peace proposals.



# Globalization and Religion

- The ideal of a common humanity (Roland Robertson)
- The residual areas of the market (Peter Beyer)
- Transnationalism and “bypass” (Rosabeth Moss Kanter)

