

In Pursuit of Peace:

The Cosmic Nature of Our Inner and Outer Journey

This is the manuscript prepared for his public lecture hosted by this Institute and scheduled to be held in Tokyo on March 17, 2011. The lecture meeting was called off due to the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11.

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Dedication

This presentation is dedicated to two people whose presence in my life helped encourage and shape my journey for peace. Professor Samuel Shapiro—friend, colleague, teacher—who released my mind to soar. Joy Ann Marsella—friend, partner, wife—who reminded me of the many joys of reality.

ABSTRACT

“Fission” and “fusion” are the most basic principles used to explain the creation and evolution of our universe. From that moment—13.7 billion years ago—when all existing matter, particles, and energy exploded across time and space, “fission” and “fusion” have remained our keys for understanding cosmic creation and the endless transformations of our cosmos. “Fission” is the process of “separation,” of division; in contrast, “fusion” is the process of “uniting, of integration. Whether we behold the heavens above, or the world about us, the processes of “fission” and “fusion” are omnipresent. Yet, too often, we have failed to grasp the reality of “fission” and “fusion,” and to recognize that they are present and relevant in all we are, in all we do, and in all we can become. This is especially true for that critical part of our lives in which we seek to understand our meaning, purpose, and identity through the pursuit of peace.

Peace is that state of conscious existence in which we find serenity, harmony, and unity with all about us, including the cosmos itself. We

seek peace in an effort release us from the burdens of uncertainty and conflict found in life. Yet, too often, as we pursue peace via “inner” and “outer” journeys, an important insight is missed. As we pursue peace, whether through meditation or through service to others, our journeys are often kept separate from one another. In keeping our journeys separate, we may find comfort, but never true fulfillment, for this can only occur when the oneness or “unity” of our nature is experienced.

“Unity” is rooted within the principles of “fission” and “fusion.” Although our ego can deceive us into concluding that things exist separately, this is not the nature of the cosmos. Pursuing peace through a separation of our inner and outer natures will always result in a felt sense that something is missing. For our cosmic nature to be fulfilled, our inner and outer natures must be must not be detached from each other. The union of our natures is in accord with the cosmic principles of “fission” and “fusion” in which all things exists in relation to others, and all things find their actualization through the cosmic ecology in which reciprocity and symbiosis are necessary. This is in accord with the mystic law of Buddhism.

The principles of “fission” and “fusion”—of separation and integration—have guided, shaped, and informed our views of the universe and of human nature. Before these principles we must respond with awe, reverence, and humility for they reveal that we are the stuff of stars, and that our inner and outer journeys in pursuit of peace will find their full realization in their unity.

Introductory Remarks

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

Charles Dickens (1812–1870)

A Tale of Two Cities—1859

THE centuries-old words by the English author Charles Dickens find new currency in our times. All about, we see the wonders of human creation, and the potential of the human spirit. And yet, amidst all of this, we find ourselves bewildered by the contradictions, conflicts, and

hypocrisies that abound. We yearn for solutions. We search the heavens and the depths for answers as we witness the collapse of the myths we once lived by. We are faced with great uncertainties, and with few resources beyond our personal creativity to resolve them. Is this where answers reside? Vaclav Havel (1994), the former poet-president of Czechoslovakia once wondered about the same question. He stated:

For the real question is whether the “brighter future” is really always so distant. What if, on the contrary, it has been there for a long time already, and only our blindness and weakness has prevented us from seeing it around us and within us, and kept us from developing it.

There is something very Buddhist about these words—something that reminds us of the need to release our mind from the fetters of daily life, to free us from the constraints of society, and to experience the truths that exist within, and to use them to change the world beyond.

The Pursuit of Peace

I wish to begin this evening by expressing my deep appreciation and gratitude to Daisaku Ikeda and the staff and members of Soka Gakkai International for offering me this special opportunity to speak on a topic of universal concern and urgency—a topic that has, in many ways, dominated most of my life—the pursuit of peace.

I found myself, even as a young child, bewildered and confused by the apparent absence of any deep sense of contentment or satisfaction among those about me—and certainly among them any deep sense of an abiding happiness or fulfillment. There was simply the need to survive. Today I find the same to be true. Too many people are caught amidst the crucible of material values, and the subsequent demands for consumption and the acquisition of goods and property that materialism requires. There are scores of frivolous popular distractions to be found in entertainment, sports, music, and celebrities lives. But the desperate search for satisfaction, purpose, and fulfillment is just below the surface. People seek a release from their sense of want and emptiness in these places and experiences only to find that the special state of inner and outer peace they need eludes them.

I also found myself bewildered by the world about me—a world filled with so many obvious problems of human suffering that we all have either experienced or observed—the problems of poverty, racism, vio-

lence, and oppression. All of these problems continue in global proportion and are too often ignored or denied by our more immediate human needs to survive and to hope for better day.

And so I come to you this evening, March 17th, 2011, from Atlanta, Georgia—after a journey of more than 8238 miles (13,258 kilometers)—to Tokyo, Japan. This is not my first voyage to Japan. I first traveled here in 1967—44 years ago—as a young man on a Fulbright Scholarship on his way to study the stresses of life among the poor and the rich in the Philippines. I was a member of that special young generation of the sixties that actually believed peace could be had if our intentions were noble and moral. I subsequently returned to Japan in 1996, where I had the pleasure and honor to meet and speak with President Daisaku Ikeda, and to visit again your beautiful landmarks—Kamakura Buddha, Ryoan-ji Gardens, Kinkaku-ji (The Golden Temple)—and various other sites that had so enthralled me in my first visit. These sites affirmed and documented traditional Japanese history and cultural values, especially the Japanese pleasure and reverence for simplicity, beauty, and harmony.

My early experiences of travel to Japan have remained with me through the years as poignant reminders of the unique and distinct Japanese sensitivities to life that are the foundation of inner and outer peace. Indeed, I can remember my fascination and wonder as I not only perceived these sites, but also experienced them at an intuitive level that revealed to me the truth that simplicity, beauty, harmony, awe, spirituality, and peace exist together in a natural order. They are one. It is only our words that separate the unity of these experiences, for the experiences are aspects of a larger consciousness and awareness of the life force itself.

I can only wonder now, what, if any, the distractions and opiates of our industrial and technological age have had upon the traditional Japanese psyche—the possible impacts life in a global era have had upon that special inner spirit and unique outer expressions of Japan's character, mind, and views of human nature. It is perhaps no accident or coincidence that I join you this evening, but rather some evolving of seeds planted long ago—some teleological push and pull—that enables us to gather this evening to explore the mysteries of peace that reside in understanding the connection between the inner and outer nature of our beings.

And so I come this evening eager to share some thoughts on the timeless human concern for peace, a concern that has been pursued throughout history and across every land and people: a concern that has been exemplified in the lives, wisdom, and thoughts of such great Asian lead-

ers of religion and philosophy of our past as Shakyamuni Buddha, Lao Tzu and Confucius of China, Mahatma Gandhi of India, and Josei Toda of Japan; and also leaders of our present such as Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, Thich Nhat Hanh of Vietnam, the Dalai Lama of Tibet, and Daisaku Ikeda of Japan. These voices, of course, though nurtured within particular cultures, offer thoughts that resonate and resound across the world and across time.

You will recall that Buddha (563–483 BCE), more than 2500 years ago, said: “*Better than a thousand hollow words, is one word that brings peace.*” And Lao Tzu (570–490 BCE), with similar wisdom, noted the endless connection between peace in our individual hearts, and peace in the world when he wrote:

*If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.
If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.
If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.*

Following in the paths of these wise observers of the human condition, Shantideva, the Eight Century Bodhisattva, observed:

“Sentient beings are strange, although wishing happiness they avoid its causes. Although wishing to avoid suffering they constantly create its causes.”

Within the same tradition of thought, and with similar sensitivity, the current Dalai Lama (July 6, 1935—present) stated:

“I believe all suffering is caused by ignorance. People inflict pain on others in the selfish pursuit of their happiness or satisfaction. Yet true happiness comes from a sense of peace and contentment, which in turn must be achieved through the cultivation of altruism, of love and compassion, and elimination of ignorance, selfishness, and greed.”

Among these icons of peace, these teachers to humanity, also stands Daisaku Ikeda, whose tireless voice has for more than a half-century advanced the cause of peace through writings on the essentials of Buddhism, especially Buddhism's fundamental recognition of the connections between inner and outer journeys for peace. Daisaku Ikeda's words reflect the larger principle of interaction, reciprocity, and symbiosis that characterize all life. He states:

If I were to propose a way of looking at the world . . . I would single out an "ethos of symbiosis." I am talking about the kind of mentality that favors harmony over opposition, unity over division, "we" over "I." Practically, it is expressed as the idea that human beings should live in harmony with other and with nature (Ikeda, 2010, p. 156).

Later in this address President Ikeda notes the fundamental concept in Confucianism of the great unity (*datong*) of all things, a unity that has had important implications for Confucian codes of social relationships and obligations.

The idea of a unity derived and sustained via a reciprocity (i.e., ecology, symbiosis) of the inner and outer elements of our being among all things, is, of course, the defining principle of Mahayana Buddhism, in which "enlightenment" occurs from a dedication to self and to others. Mahayana Buddhism asserts that because of the inseparability of self and other—of our inner and outer nature—we have a special responsibility to serve others. This is an essential part of the pathway to peace.

This belief is, as we all know, the way of the *Bodhisattva*, the person who seeks to help others attain enlightenment through their own compassion, empathy, and personal sacrifice. I am fond of the words of the great *Bodhi*, Shantideva, whose endless verses expressing his desire to serve others reflect his integrative nature.

By the virtue amassed by all that I have done,
 May the pain of every being be completely healed.
 May I be doctor and medicine, and may I be nurse,
 For all sick beings in the world, till all are well.
 May food and drink rain down to stop all thirst and hunger.
 And during times of famine, may I turn myself into food and drink.

May I be an endless treasure for the poor and destitute;
 May I turn into all things they could ever need,

And may these then be placed close beside them.
 With no sense of loss, may I give up my possessions,
 even my body,
 And all past, present, and future virtues, to help all beings.

Quoted in Thurman, R. (1998). *Inner Revolution: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Real Happiness*. NY: Riverhead Books, pp. 158–159.

Robert Thurman, a Buddhist scholar who studied Tibetan Buddhism, and is currently at Columbia University in New York, writes: “This is the messianic drive of the *Bodhisattva*, the spirit of love and compassion called the enlightening soul. It is not merely the wish that all be well with all beings—it is the determination that you yourself will assume responsibility for others (Thurman, 1998, p, 159).” Of course, in helping others, the *Bodhisattva* actually helps him or herself via the emerging awareness and consciousness of the cosmic law (sometimes called mystic law) of unity and oneness that is termed *Myoho-rence*.

Daisaku Ikeda (2011), has noted that idea of “integration” is expressed in the Buddhist term “*kechi-en*” (literally, to “join” a “connection,” it denotes a causal relationship or function that joins life and its environment). “*Kechi-en*” is associated with the theory of “dependent origination,” an important belief advanced by Buddha and his followers. Dependent origination holds that every phenomena, be it social or natural, is the result of connection with something else. Nothing can exist in total isolation; everything is interrelated. Daisaku Ikeda points out that the Buddhist idea of inter-relations is multidimensional and it goes beyond the immediacy of the moment to space and time.

Before the magnificence of these words, and before the thoughts of such great figures of peace, I must say that I am humbled by the task before me. I am hopeful that in our brief time together, I will, in some way, offer you thoughts that will add to your own insights about the nature of peace—insights that have been forged from your personal experiences and efforts to pursue peace amidst our challenging times. Above all, know this, I come to you this evening to re-affirm the thoughts of those who have come before us, who have recognized and spoken of the intimate connection between inner and outer peace—between the inherent connection of all things, between our human pursuit for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment, and the unfolding of the moment of cosmic creation.

The Pursuit of Peace: The Inner and Outer Journey

Permit me, if I may, to intentionally disturb any comfort you may be having with your life, by sharing some thoughts on the complexities and inconveniences of pursuing peace. I will, for a few moments, play the “clouds,” as articulated so wondrously in the great Haiku master, Matsuo Basho’s (1644–1694) eloquent poem about attending to the necessary disturbances in our life. Basho writes: “*Clouds come, from time to time, to give man a rest from looking at the moon.*”

Inner Peace

The task before all of us is to grasp the essential principle of life—of “embeddedness”—of the constant cosmic process of “fission” of “fusion” that separates and joins all things. While our human brain leads us naturally to separate and detach all things about us and to assign them names and symbols for easy identification and retrieval, it is an illusion that all things are separate, isolated, and detached. The physical reality is that all things are connected and flow endlessly into one another. You will recall here the Japanese term “*Engi*.” Daisaku Ikeda (2010) offers a powerful understanding of the term:

The Buddhist principle of dependent origination (Jpn. Engi) reflects a cosmology in which all human and natural phenomena come into existence within a matrix of inter-relatedness. Thus we are urged to respect the uniqueness of each existence, which supports and nourishes all within the larger, living whole. What distinguishes the Buddhist view of interdependence is that it is based on a direct, intuitive apprehension of the cosmic life immanent in all phenomena. Therefore, Buddhism unequivocally rejects all forms of violence as an assault on the harmony that underlies and binds the web of being. (Ikeda, 2010, pp 235–236—in A New Humanism).

Marsella (1995, 1999) offered similar comments in advocating guidelines for living a spiritual life. In his first guideline, he stated:

I resolve to be more aware and responsive to the spiritual dimensions of my being and my nature. I intend to accept and to embrace the self-evident truth that the very life force that is within me is the same life force that moves, propels, and governs the universe itself, and because of this, I must approach life with a new sense of awe,

humbled by the mystery of this truth, yet elated and confident by its consequences. I am alive! I am part of life! And, because of this, I must act in ways that encourage and support this fact, and I must act in ways that are responsive to its requirements and demands. . . . I resolve to perfect the spiritual dimension of my being because it is in this pursuit that I can discover and fulfill my unique destiny in the larger cosmic plan whose details remain unknown, but whose intent seems clear—the promotion of an evolutionary harmony, balance, and synergy among all life forms. (Marsella, 1994, p. 10; 1999)

It is a fundamental principle of nature—and especially of life itself—that if we continue to separate ourselves from the larger natural and social world in which we exist, we cannot become all that we are capable of becoming as an expression of life. We must, as so many great thinkers in philosophy and religion have stated, recognize our connections to the broader order, and become part of it.

All of us are aware of the current human condition. We find ourselves beset by overwhelming problems of mind and person that bring us distress and discomfort. We seek peace. We desire that wonderful sense of harmony and being centered in life. We desire the calmness, tranquility, and serenity that is the heart of peace. We desire that sense of unity with all about us and with the very cosmos itself. But all this eludes us. We try, often desperately, to experience peace, but too often experience fear, anxiety, distrust, anger, frustration, despair, uncertainty, and alienation. We turn to those things that we are told will bring us “inner” peace, including reflection, contemplation, prayer, meditation, chanting, yoga, therapy, and even substances such as tranquilizers, alcohol, and illegal drugs. We consider going on a retreat from the world and entering a distant monastery that will isolate us from the world. We turn often to religions, hoping to find within their beliefs and practices the peace we seek.

In discussing asceticism, Chumley (2011) points out that there is much virtue in pursuing inner peace through a life of asceticism or withdrawal and contemplation. But he also notes that withdrawal is not as important as the effort after tranquility that comes with being silent and still. He writes:

Does it take leaving the world behind to become spiritually enlightened? Does one need rigorous asceticism to encounter God? It may be argued that many of us already lead solitary lives

in our own modern equivalent of caves and monasteries: the cells of modern apartment buildings found in impersonal high rise buildings and desert caverns of urban avenues. While there has been an exodus away from churches and “organized religions” in recent decades, record numbers of spiritual seekers are meditating and praying on their own, in new churches, on yoga retreats or in non-denominational meditation centers. There is much value in simply taking time to be silent and still. There is tremendous power in setting oneself aside and letting the likeness of God inside you shine through. Settling down and quieting the frenetic stimuli of modern multitasking not only brings peace and calm, it may also be a revelatory experience (something the ancients expected and called “epiphanic”) (Chumley, 2011).

And yet, by itself, in my opinion, the inner journey for peace alone will always be insufficient, for it keeps us focused on our internal mind. We may find temporary comfort. But, ultimately, there will be a sense of being incomplete, for the virtue of pursuing and joining inner and outer will not be present. The joining is what characterized Buddha’s life! The “inner” journey is not unimportant. Rather, its fullest and most complete virtue may be in making us aware that connection and unity require service to the world beyond ourselves.

Retreat from the problems of our world is unacceptable. Rather we must address the inequities and injustices with a felt sense of passion that comes from meeting our social responsibilities, obligations, and duties - our outer journey. I feel the pursuit of the “inner” journey by itself denies the fundamental principle of life itself that we are both separate (i.e., self-assertive) and connected (integrative). An active and intentional melding of inner and outer peace efforts is the most direct and obvious expression of life.

Outer Peace

Friends, ladies and gentlemen, young and old, rich and poor, we are beset by a world that challenges the very nature of our being. I have written previously:

Human survival and well being is now embedded in a complex and interdependent global web of economic, political, social, technical, and environmental events, forces, and changes. The scale, complexity, and consequences of these events, forces, and changes consti-

tute an important challenge to our individual and collective well being by confronting us with an array of complex, conflicting, and confusing demands and/or opportunities. Our response to this challenge—as individuals, societies and nations—will shape the nature, quality, meaning, and [security] of our lives in the coming century (Marsella, 1998, p. 289).

We gather in a time of political, cultural, economic, and moral upheaval for our world. We are faced with more than 35 wars, insurrections, and peaceful revolutions of various proportion. We are faced with endemic global poverty, widespread environmental abuse and collapse, vast waves of transnational migration, numerous epidemics of deadly diseases, growing numbers of political and economic refugees, global population growth that is disproportionate for our resources and cultural life styles.

We are being overwhelmed by an information and communication technology that threatens—by its very power and popularity—to reshape the human mind and our views of human nature itself. Our lives are increasingly controlled by a world of multinational corporations who urge us through constant marketing and advertising to be what **THEY** wish us to be—consumers and materialists—telling us that only through business and commerce can our security be assured.

We seek comfort and hope from all those societal institutions—government, business, education, religion—that we expected would offer answers and protection, only to find that they have become part of the problem, part of the challenges to our needs for security and safety.

We are faced with the forces of globalization, regionalism, nationalism, and localisms—each competing for our loyalty, approval, tolerance, and identity. They seek control of our lives. These forces seduce us, even as we try to resist them. Like the sirens of Homer's ancient Greek novel, *The Odyssey*, we turn from them again and again, recognizing their dangers; we try to resist them, yet we know that they will return again and again until we yield.

Amidst this milieu, we find ourselves bewildered, much as I was in my youth. I could see the discontent, I could see the suffering, I could see unhappiness, I could see the anger and frustration, but I could not understand why it continued and why so little was done to ameliorate it. We continued—often unaware of the very lives we were leading, of the discomforts, of the punishing consequences. We endured—seeking, hoping, wondering—if at some point, an answer would come from someone, from somewhere, at sometime.

1. Arthur Koestler— The Ghost in the Machine

I needed an idea—a liberating thought that would help coalesce and crystallize my thinking. I found that from a novelist turned social commentator, Arthur Koestler, in his 1967 book with the unlikely title “*The Ghost in the Machine*,” a volume by a non-psychologist about the poverty of psychological thought and theory as it remained mired in behaviorism and other mechanistic views of behavior.

Koestler advanced the concept of a “holon,” in which he observed that all things are part of something larger, even as they seem to exist separately. He termed his idea the “Janus Principle,” named after the Roman god who faced two ways. In a wonderful example that has remained with me through the years, and continues to guide my thinking even here this evening, Koestler noted that we can take a liver cell, place it in a Petrie dish, add nourishment, and it will continue to live for ages. But, it will never know or realize its true nature; it will never be a liver, until it is joined with other liver cells. It is only at that point that its full nature may be experienced. In other words, it is only when it leaves its self-assertive and separate life existence that it can help create something much more than the sum of its parts—a liver—an emergent life form that is more than the simple addition of its parts.

For me, the brilliance of Koestler’s insights—rooted as they were in the earlier general systems theories of Ludwig von Bertalanffy—was the explicit idea that all forms of life, from the cellular to the world itself, consist both of *separate* elements guided by a “self assertion” principle, and of an *emergent* element, guided by an integrative principle. My head swirled with excitement! Here at last was different model for human behavior that acknowledged the “embeddedness” of all things in each other—the unity and oneness of life.

Now with greater clarity, I could see that the often pathological and destructive effects of our culture and the nature of our social order and formation. These forces interfered with the natural fulfillment of our human nature. We were compelled to value individuality and separateness. We were prevented by the very culture in which we lived to choose priorities that detracted rather than promoted unity. Life styles—driven, by beliefs, values, and actions that denied the opportunity for connecting to others in pursuit of peace— were a source of problems.

2. The Cultural and Societal Barriers to Peace

I have identified the following eleven popular culture and societal

themes that prevent us from grasping the inner and outer nature of our beings, and keep us isolated in our ego and self-absorption. Indeed, they are among the greatest impediments to the pursuit of outer peace because they emphasize goals and means that have little sensitivity, awareness, or responsibility to the larger social order. I have placed their opposite, or competing tension, in parentheses at the end of each theme.

1. **Consumerism:** The promotion of the constant and unlimited purchase of goods as a source of personal satisfaction and status. Consumerism has little concern for the consumption and exploitation of natural and human resources. (**Sustainability**)
2. **Materialism:** The belief that personal worth and well being is directly related to the acquisition of tangible goods and personal possessions. Materialism is a major source of consumerism. (**Spirituality**)
3. **Commodification:** The assignment of a monetary value to all things so they can be treated as commodities (i.e., articles of commerce or trade on the commodity market and exchange) to be considered in determining worth and value. Within this ethos, money becomes a critical arbiter of personal, governmental, and commercial decisions. (**Human Worth**)
4. **Violence and Power:** The impulse and tendency to use harsh and abusive force for both pleasure (e.g., football, computer games) and to achieve preferences (e.g., bullying, gangs, war). There is a tolerance of violence and, in many ways, a fascination with its expression and consequences. (**Peace**)
5. **Individual Self Interest:** A focus on the individual to such an extent that there is minimal attention to the consequences of this for the social nexus. Support for individual rights, while essential for the protection of human freedom and liberty, is often in conflict with the larger social nexus. (**Social Interest, *Gemeinschaftesgefühl***)
6. **Celebrity Identification and Pre-Occupation:** The attachment and concern for the lives of celebrities to such an extent that there is pre-occupation with the events in celebrity lives at the expense of concern for critical issues in one's own life and events of the wider world (e.g., People Magazine, TV shows, fan clubs, social networks). (**Attachment to "Ordinary" Life**)
7. **Competition:** Competition is a defining trait of the American national character and daily life. Throughout education, commerce, entertainment, athletics, and political arenas of life, competition is considered good and to be encouraged. "Survival of the fittest" is an

ingrained virtue, and there is often little concern or admiration for those who are second best. (**Cooperation**)

8. **Financial Greed:** In accord with its capitalistic system and attachment to competition in all areas of life, the unbridled pursuit of profit has turned into greed—an excessive desire to acquire money and material wealth often at the sacrifice of all ethical, moral, and often, legal standards. (**Sharing**)
9. **Rapid and Constant Change:** The emphasis on rapid “change” and the pursuit of the new is a valued goal and activity. This is powered by the new technology. This emphasis continually pushes the boundaries of current and conventional beliefs and activities to new limits. This is especially true for TV programs, movies, computer games regarding explicit sexuality, violence, and dress styles and fads. (**Tradition, Continuity**)
10. **Hedonism:** While the pursuit of pleasure is certainly a “normal” human value and behavior, first articulated in great detail in ancient Greece, and subsequently in Western psychology (behavior is motivated to seek pleasure and to avoid pain), its pursuit in America is unhampered by the extensive freedoms to self-indulge, and to disregard tradition or convention. These views often conflict with religious beliefs that see seeking pleasure as a sin. (**Self-Denial, Endure**)
11. **Transgressive Ideology:** An emerging cultural ideology that accepts as normative, violations of human decency and morality by promoting illicit behaviors (e.g., violent murder, torture, rape, pedophilia, incest, pornography, substance abuse, sado-masochism) involving all ages. This is manifesting itself in literature, movies, music, and television. (**Civility, Decency, Respect**)

Here, now, much to my dismay, I call attention to the fact that these are the dominant themes of American popular culture that have served to erode and homogenize traditional cultures around the world, bringing with them conflicts and commitment to a way of life that lacks substance and keeps populations captive to spurious goals and values. You are already aware of this in Japan, but I wish to remind you of it through a clear identification of the basic values, priorities, and preferences that are currently shaping the world. I wish to make it absolutely clear that I consider these values, themes, and ethos to be a major impediment to outer peace.

The Way of the Bodhisattva

What possibilities, what paths, what choices are available to us? Can we retreat to a distant monastery, there to live an ascetic life in pursuit of the truths that can only come when the realities of our worldly life are denied and forgotten? Can we remain amidst the worldly challenges, deciding consciously to assume the mantle of social responsibilities, obligations, civilities, and duties? Can we become Bodhisattvas? Yes, of course, we can. It is our nature. But to do so, we must counter the events and forces that promote our separation and detachment in our “outer” journey enabling us to join our two journeys’ toward peace.

It is logical to ask, “What can I do?” “How can I to counter these pernicious events and forces.” The answer is that you must choose “voice over silence, action over passivity, and compassion over selfishness.” The culture in which we live has very different goals than your pursuit of peace and meaning. The culture sees you simply as a “consumer,” helping to keep an abusive and greedy system alive through spending and purchasing. The culture sees you as a “nationalist,” willing to accept your nation’s actions—right or wrong, invading, occupying, and/or controlling others for selfish benefits.

Your reply must be clear and unequivocal. You must do what you can, when you can, to resist the demands of popular culture. Ultimately (*Saishu-teki ni*), we should serve the causes of justice, tolerance, equality, and sustainability through fostering empathy, compassion, and social interest (*gemeinschaftesgefühl*) As I see it at this point in time, we can engage the world, by doing the following:

1. Accept the Buddhist philosophy of cosmic unity or oneness
2. Accept the cosmic principles of “fission” and “fusion”
3. Choose peace over violence, conflict, and war
4. Choose activism over passivity (Letters, donations, voting)
5. Choose voice over silence (non-violent protests)
6. Choose service over selfishness (volunteerism)
7. Choose cooperation over competition
8. Choose education and learning over ignorance
9. Choose courage over fear and comfort
10. Choose justice over injustice
11. Unite your personal, professional, and civic lives
12. Support non-killing: “Assert right not to be killed and take responsibility not to kill others” (see Paige, 2002, 2009)
13. Support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

14. Support Nobel Prize Laureate charter on non-violence (Noble Prize Laureates Charter, 2007)
15. Choose life—choose *Lifeism*.

Lifeism

This evening I have shared with you some thoughts on the pursuit of peace via the inner and outer journeys we take in life. But, more specifically, I have said that the distinction between the inner and outer journeys is an illusion because of the very essence of the first instant or moment of creation in which matter and energy sped across space, forming the cosmos and bringing unity and oneness via “fission” and “fusion.” This is the essence of our universe—of the billions of stars that form our galaxy, and the billions of galaxies that exist in our cosmos, and here I must point out that astrophysicists now believe there are many universes beyond our own. This should fill us all with wonder, awe, and reverence. It is life affirming. It is in accord with the act of cosmic creation that erases all distinctions between the inner and outer journey for peace. They are one, and they are animated by life (Marsella, 2007, 2008).

We are part of *life*, the very force that animates the universe and that is present in all things we call *living*. We are alive—we are part of *life!* By accepting this premise, and by making it the core of our identity as individuals and groups, we can affirm a truth so obvious and so critical to our sense of well-being that it can be the anchor for our personal, collective, and national identities. We can move beyond the struggles for identity at individual, cultural, and national levels, in favor of the ultimate identity—*life* and the ecologies that nurture and sustain it. We can pursue a new philosophy, and a new set of beliefs and practices that considers humanity as only one reflection of life. I call this *Lifeism*.

There are so many terms across the world that embody the essence of **lifeism**. For example, there is the South African term “*Ubuntu*,” which means “A quality of humaneness, embodying the supremacy of compassion and the rejection of anger, resentment, and envy.” *Ubuntu* combines ideas of remorse and apology with forgiveness and is at the heart of the truth and reconciliation movement. And there is also the Sanskrit term, “*Ahimsa*,” meaning “The quality of humanness implying the absence of “*himsa*” or violence that allows one to resist injustice without fear on the one hand or hatred on the other.” There is also the Native Hawaiian term, “*aloha*,” which is difficult to translate, but essentially refers to love and the intent to establish a spiritual connection. And last-

ly, of course, there is the term “*Satyagraha*”, meaning “nonviolence in being and practice”. This is at the heart of Gandhi’s mission of “non-violence” and the more recent non-killing movement of Professor Glenn Paige. And we must not forget the Japanese word, “*engi*,” that refers to the unity and connection among all things. To these we can add “*Agape*,” the Greek term meaning “an unconditional altruistic love for humanity,” that is considered to be at the heart of Christianity . . . when not forgotten (Marsella, 2006).

Lifeism is that transcendent sense of awe, reverence, and connection in which we are moved beyond ourselves and beyond time and place to new levels of consciousness. Spirituality moves us, as individuals and groups, beyond our past to the richness of the immediacy of the moment. And with this comes an experience of attachment and belonging to something much larger than our individual or collectives experiential levels. We are part of *life*, and that means we have ties to all forms of *life* on Earth and to the mysteries of the cosmos itself.

Lifeism encourages us to encounter and to reflect upon death, and to understand its inseparable relation to life. As we behold *life* in all of its forms, as we witness its blossoming and its passing, we become acutely aware of the inevitable cycle of *life* and *death*, especially the fact that they are one. To understand and to accept the mystery that *life* and *death* are one can only enrich our life, and can only promote a greater sense of responsibility to promote *life*. This is a new set of beliefs for our times. This is spiritual foundation for living amidst the trials we face as individuals, societies, and nations. It calls upon us to grasp and accept the realities of our existence as the stuff of stars, and to live according to the principles of life inherent in our creation. Let us embrace the reality that I/we/life and the universe are one!

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