

**Message to the Educational Symposium of
the Soka Education Research Centre on Global Citizenship,
University of Guelph-Humber**

On this purposeful holding of the First International Symposium of the Soka Education Research Centre on Global Citizenship, allow me to offer with wholehearted gratitude my message of felicitations to Dr. Paul Sherman, Director of the Centre who commands my utmost respect, as well as to the many distinguished scholars and participants who are taking part across the world online.

I believe the symposium's theme, "Operationalizing Value-Creating Education Across International Milieus," not only lays out for all who yearn for peace, a guidepost towards which we should aspire, it also provides us with concrete means to achieve peace.

What lies at the core of "value" in value-creating education? Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who founded *Soka*, or value-creating education early in the 20th century, was arrested and died in prison for opposing Japan's wartime militarist regime. He perceived that lying at the heart of value is "life," and declared, "All other values arise solely within the context of interaction with life."

International society is now confronted by a daunting array of challenges, from the ongoing pandemic and tragedy wrought by war, to grave economic disparities and the looming consequences of climate change. In our search for solutions, I contend that the starting point to which we should all return, and from where we set out together in taking our first new step forward, is life itself.

People today live in a world torn and tyrannized by uncertainty and despair, by animosity and violence. That is precisely why the inestimable worth of all lives, those of young people and children in particular, must lie at the root of our every expression and endeavor.

I stand among those who believe that the challenge of education is to safeguard the inherent dignity of each and every young life and set free their boundless capacity for creativity; a task requiring persistent, often unseen effort, and serving as a beacon of hope that nothing can dim nor diminish.

The path to a future of peace and harmonious coexistence for all is to be found in transcending the differences that divide us, and in bringing people together at the most universal level of life; it is to be found in amplifying the union of global citizens as they strive to cast for themselves and others the light of wisdom and compassion.

The University of Guelph-Humber has a proud tradition of educational excellence that is ever cognizant of the importance of diversity, its doors open to the world as it vigorously explores new frontiers of value-creating education. I applaud your institution for this and wish to join you in that remarkable effort.

I am confident that this symposium represents a step forward that is as enduring as it is resolute in realizing a century of education, of life, and of peace.

Daisaku Ikeda

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