# SOKA EDUCATION: LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
## ALISO VIEJO, CALIFORNIA
## FEBRUARY 11 & 12, 2006

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The Soka Education Student Research Project is a part of the Soka Student Union at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, California.

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Dear Students, Faculty and Staff of Soka University of America (SUA)

It is with much delight that the Soka Education Student Research Project (SESRP), together with the Pacific Basin Research Center (PBRC), can host the second Soka Education Conference: "Soka Education; Leadership for Sustainable Development" to be he held in Founders' Hall on February 11 and 12, 2006.

This volume consists of the papers that students, alumni and faculty will present at the conference.

We hope that by printing the paper prior to the conference, all participants will gain a better chance of immersing themselves in the perspectives presented and thus ask informed questions to challenge the presenters. We have printed the papers in a format that allows them to be kept for posterity and hope that the participants of the conference in the future can look at this volume and recall encouraging memories of students, faculty and staff working in collaboration to realize Soka Education as represented in this academic gathering.

The SESRP wishes to recognize the amazing help it has received from so many people at SUA in form of finances and guidance, and further hopes that this Soka Education Conference will be one of many, many more to come.

Sincerely,
SESRP

# Looking Beyond Economics – Approach for an Alternative Sustainable Future

**Kajal Gulati**

Soka Education: Leadership for Sustainable Development

Soka University of America

*February 11-12, 2006*

*Today the most important thing, in my view, is to study the reasons why humankind does nothing to avert the threats about which it knows so much, and why it allows itself to be carried onward by some kind of perpetual motion.*

- *President Vaclev Havel, Czech Republic*

The challenge of sustainability is the challenge against our more than 200 years of ideology.  It is the struggle of questioning the modes of thought that has driven our generation and the generations before us.  The advent of the industrial revolution with the invention of the steam engine launched this journey of competition, of profit-maximization, of consumerism and materialism that forms the foundation of our economic thought.  Today, a country's growth is defined as the growth in just one single variable, such as the Gross National Product, which is the aggregate of the goods and services produced by a country's nationals.  The greater the number, the more prosperous the nations are termed.  This race for maximization of production of goods has been accompanied by an enormous rise in population levels far exceeding the carrying capacity of earth, which has brought the human race to an almost graduating point of their lives on this earth. Even though we are well aware of the catastrophic consequences that await us, quite contrarily, we have done little to avert this fundamental challenge of our existence.  Thus, the goal of the paper is to delve deeper into the economic barricade that obstructs sustainability, and which is the primary challenge that needs to be overcome by any future leadership for sustainable development.

Economics: Challenge of Sustainability

In 1760, the invention of the steam engine in England marked the beginning of the industrial revolution that was characterized by an exponential rise in the production of goods through the increased use of machines and improved means of technology.  Capital and labor became important inputs for the production of goods, and improvements in technology were viewed as a means to enhance the efficiency of both capital and labor in order to produce more goods and services.  The increased availability of goods to the population implied that people could consume more goods with the higher wages they earned through greater

production of goods. At the same time, this enormous increase in the production of goods was accompanied by a gigantic rise in the world population as the industrial revolution fervor spread to other parts of the world such as the United States. Just in the period beginning from 1750 to 1950, an additional 1.7 billion people were added on the earth (Todaro, 2002). With constant increases in technology and improved efficiency and productivity, goods and services were available to cater to the rising needs of earth's burgeoning population. The notion spread wide that earth's "problem of production" has been solved (Schumacher, 1973).

In 1776, Adam Smith in his book, The Wealth of Nations, laid the foundations of classical economics, which formed the basis of present day capitalistic and free-market theory. His theory was based on the basic assumptions of man's tendency for promoting his own self-interest and his unlimited needs. Profit-maximization and competition became some of the central themes that dominated the capitalistic ideology of many industrial nations such as the Americas and the European nations. In every way, nation's main goal was to increase their GNPs and maximize consumption of goods, which was seen as a measure of increasing welfare. The emphasis on increasing production was so intense that it led to a fierce competition to get natural resources, which constituted the "natural capital" for production. Industrial nations started invading other places with cheaper and greater access to natural resources and labor, and thus began the race for colonies, which ultimately culminated in two world wars at the beginning of the 20th century.

The post world war period saw the rise of socialism as a system opposed to the capitalistic profit-maximization motive of production. It was a system based on the collective ownership on means of power, and therefore, the means of production. Even though the socialistic system of production changed the means and the purpose of production, the underlined focus on increasing production of goods remained unchanged.

And, now approximately after 250 years of the advent of industrial revolution, we find ourselves in a globalizing world characterized by "increasing interdependence of national economies, financial markets, trade, corporations, production, distribution, and consumer marketing" (Henderson, 1999). It is an age of multinational and transnational corporations crossing borders to produce goods at lowest costs possible. Consumers have access to a massive variety of goods made in different parts of the world to choose from. However, through these series of transformations that the world at large has undergone, a continuum remains. It is the continuation of our focus on production, on increasing the number of goods available to us, and on emphasizing on the maximization of consumption for increasing welfare. The current economic thought proposes an increased production of goods so that when everyone on this planet has fulfilled their basic needs for goods, they will shift their focus on other leisure and creative activities. As E.F. Schumacher has described, "For the rich countries, they say, the most important task now is 'education for leisure' and, for the poor countries, the 'transfer of technology'" so that the poorer nations too can increase their production of goods (Schumacher, 1973).

Amidst this unquestioned race for improving GNPs by producing more to cater to the needs of world's increasing population and of promoting the pedagogies of competition and self-interest, we have exercised what I call a "conscious oblivion" to avert the risks of producing beyond earth's carrying capacity. In 1972, the research conducted by the Club of Rome, titled "Limits to Growth" was one of the preliminary attempts to empirically calculate that the vital natural resources, essential for our sustenance on earth, will deplete extremely early, within our lifetimes, if we continued to use them at our current rates. The study "aroused extensive debate by proposing an annihilation scenario for our race and our planet" (Meadows et. al.). It was also highly criticized by many economists on grounds of the authenticity of data and on the premises that technological-scientific changes will enable us to ward off any such possible threat. However, irrespective of our misgivings on the data employed and the exactness of predictability, the book carried a basic common sense message that the earth's resources are finite, and therefore, there are "natural" limits to the amount of economic growth we can possibly achieve. The research, thus, became one of the first attempts to raise global awareness on the massive environmental problems confronting our planet.

It wasn't until the late 1980s and early 1990s that the concept "sustainable development" was popularized and the need was felt to have the kind of development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Even though we have continued to use resources from much before, sustainable development became an issue in the past few decades because of the rapid technological strides, increases in population, and the massive increase in the use of our limited "natural capital" for production of goods in the post-world war period. With the world population now reaching over 6 billion, the earth's ability to support life and simultaneously replenish its resources was severely brought to question. Greater awareness was raised for the human race to amend its current lifestyles if we want us to continue living on planet earth.

Now, the threat is more real than ever. As Henderson points out, "The social costs of our economic system have now risen above the threshold of sensory awareness: we smell the dirty air and water, see the waste and pollution, hear the rising noise levels and sense the growing social disorder and breakdown" (Henderson & Ikeda, 2004). Yet, we have quietly and easily taken comfort in our "conscious oblivion" by shielding ourselves of the threat as we travel in our SUVs, stay in our air-conditioned rooms, and enjoy the joys from the consumption of goods.

Achieving sustainability is a challenge that directly confronts our generation. Its nature and scope differs starkly from other issues, such as human rights and racial discrimination, in the struggle against which Martin Luther Kings, Gandhis, and Rosa Parks of the past generations arose. The first point of distinction is the global scale of the problem. Sustainability is not a challenge for any particular region or a nation. Instead, it is a common goal for the entire humanity.

The second aspect that demarcates sustainability from other past issues is the indirect nature of the problem. We have successfully safeguarded ourselves from the urgency and seriousness of the issue by finding clever short term alternatives. I call them "clever" because the alternative goods we have produced to protect ourselves are manifestations of man's genius, of our improved technology, and of our superiority on this planet, which we have constantly felt the compulsion to assert due to our entrenched tendencies for competition. As a result, we have managed to keep postponing the problem with an amazingly lazy apathy that "Who cares about the future? Let's enjoy the fruits of our generation – the 'goods,' and leave the rest for future generations to handle."

It is precisely because of these reasons that we have lacked the enthusiasm and the direct motivation to find meaningful solutions to tackle the issue despite the fact that we seldom question the value of sustainable development. And therefore, it is imperative that any successful leadership for sustainability carefully recognizes the above mentioned points of difference. It is an issue that demands immediate attention now, and we cannot afford to linger it on any further. Delaying it would imply that we have chosen our own doom. It would imply that we have given a higher priority to our short-term intellectual pleasure over our long-term wisdom to combine intellect and good sense.

## Leading Sustainability by Overcoming the "Production" Focus

Even if we recognize the urgency and seriousness of the problem now, the biggest challenge that confronts us is developing alternative modes of thought and overcoming some of our deeply entrenched ideologies – ideologies that generations of the past 250 years have unquestioningly followed. The struggle is to come out of this way of thinking that nations are growing if they are producing more goods and that welfare is maximized if consumers can use more goods. We have to downright admit that as long as our goods continue to grow our populations will continue to grow unsustainably alongside. We have to accept that even though our technologies can help us develop some alternative modes of energy, some of our natural resources, such as water, are absolutely essential and are rapidly depleting. As Schumacher describes, "we have indeed labored to make some of the capital which today helps us to produce – a large fund of scientific,

technological, and other knowledge; an elaborate physical infrastructure; innumerable types of sophisticated capital equipment, etc. – but all this is but a small part of the total capital we are using. Far larger is the capital provided by nature and not by man – and we do not even recognize as such. This larger part is now being used up at an alarming rate, and that is why it is an absurd and suicidal error to believe, and act on the belief, that the problem of production has been solved" (1973).

Without my slightest doubts, this task is neither easy nor very comforting. People, like Henderson and Schumacher, whose viewpoints I have also mentioned earlier, had to face tremendous criticism when they questioned these existing norms on which the current society is based. Schumacher, who advocated the belief that "production from local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life" met with severe criticism for challenging society's notion of progress and profit. He offered alternative approaches to the "production" focus by looking at work as not a necessary evil and labor as not servile to capital and as an input for production. Instead, he emphasized on the importance of work as a way of finding meaning in our lives and as something in which human beings would like to engage in. He foresaw self-reliant societies, and also is the founder of groups, such as the Intermediate Technologies Groups that work at grassroots levels for finding technologies that can be employed in rural areas, use renewable sources of energy, increase employment, and at the same time, improve efficiency and productivity.

Similarly, Hazel Henderson has gone against the current trend of global corporations by reiterating the idea that "old economics pollutes the environment and makes a lot of people poor and miserable, but not everybody. Many do very well, including those with power and inherited wealth and the special interests that influence politics and resource allocation. Globalization on such economic models is widening the gap between rich and poor. All I did was develop a more holistic view, which spurred my interest in making myself into a whole human being. You can't have a holistic view without being a whole person" (Henderson & Ikeda, 2004). She was also highly criticized at first, and even called by some newsletters as one of the most dangerous women in the United States. Yet, she held firm to her beliefs; self studied to hold her ground against famous economists, and ultimately successfully propagated the concepts of "love economy" and "green technologies." She has also devised indexes that measure progress not in terms of number of goods produced, but include a more holistic definition of human welfare, such as the effect of human activities on the environment. In other words, Henderson has advocated a complete shift from the way contemporary society conducts its metrics and has offered newer and more encompassing modes of measuring progress. There are several points I want to make through my specific choice of Henderson's and Schumacher's example. First and foremost, both of them have advocated a thorough revision of our basic metrics, and instead offered concrete alternative approaches to the "production" focus of economics that I have discussed earlier. Second, both have met with tremendous resistance from authorities in promoting what they believe is simple common sense and what supports sustainable development and environmental protection. And finally,

both have initiated their movements from grassroots level instead of the top-down approach.  These three points, I believe, are crucial if any successes in achieving sustainability are to be made.  Any leadership for sustainable development has to offer concrete and well-defined alternatives to our current ways of thinking, has to exercise thorough prescience in order to resist the opposition offered by the present trends, and lastly has to be ready to initiate changes at the groundwork.

Finding Alternative Solutions for Sustainability: Revisiting Soka Education


It is in finding these alternative proposals to the "production" focus that I consider vital to revisit some of the basic tenets of Soka Education and its affiliated meanings. Globalization and the techno-savvy economic focus of our age is something that is given to us; it is something we cannot possibly change.  More or less, we are "global" citizens in the sense that we are living in an age where we get affected by political and socio-economic changes taking place in other parts of the planet.  However, the choice is upto us whether we choose to abide with this narrow definition of "global" citizens or find alternative meanings of being truly global - of being truly able to develop an indirect empathy for life on our planet.

The task of interpreting global citizenship and redefining it would entail questioning the narrow motives of competition between nations, of reexamining and reconsidering the possible message of basic Adam Smith's theory of profit-maximization and promotion of self-interest.  It would imply adding newer messages of "cooperation and creativity" along with competition – the three Cs important for sustainability on our planet (Henderson, 1996).  Therefore, the challenge is not whether we are global citizens or not, it is how we, as Daisaku Ikeda says, "use this change for world peace and human happiness" (Henderson & Ikeda, 2004).  In my opinion, it is crucial challenges such as these that lay in front of Soka-educated global citizens.  Aspects of Soka Education pedagogy, such as being "philosophers of a renaissance of life," will remain mere ideologies until and unless we engage ourselves in an active process to find newer and creative solutions to the fundamental problems that challenge the very existence of human beings.  Another central aspect of Soka Education is its profound reverence for life and its emphasis on human happiness.  If we were to interpret the meaning of "sanctity of life" and "human happiness" according to our existing frameworks, it would imply maximizing the need for more goods for ensuring the existence of our current generation and maximizing consumption of goods for maximizing human happiness.  However, once again, as people who have access to Soka Education, we need to rigorously examine, redefine, and reshape these accepted definitions and extend it to imply protecting the sanctity of life not only of our generation, but also ensuring the perpetual flow of life across many more future generations to follow.  It will allude to finding alternative meanings of "human happiness," those which are starkly different from the current definitions.

As Tsunesaburo Makiguchi rightly "described the shifts over time in modes of national competition: from

the military, to the political, to the economic – which he saw becoming, at the turn of the twentieth century, the predominant mode of competition," and finally, if we are to plunge into the stage of humanitarian competition, we need to find alternatives for sustainable development that upturn some of the very basics of economic competition (Ikeda, 2001). And in doing so, we need to be prepared to face criticisms and to be questioned while competing against the very theory of "competition."

Thus, in transforming our age from one of economic competition to that of humanitarian competition and from self-interested development to sustainable development, we need to thoroughly analyze the "production" focus of our age and some of its economic foundations that we all have inherited from the generations before us. What I am trying to advocate is not a deprivation of goods, but for us to reexamine the assumption that reducing consumption instead of maximizing it will fundamentally deprive us. And in reexamining those, we need to find creative solutions to preserving our planet and ourselves – solutions that direct the flow of globalization and our technology towards sustainability not only for the next 100 -200 years, but instead ensure the continuation of our planet uninterruptedly.

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# Imperatives for Student Leadership and Sustainable Development in Education: Teacher Renewal, Training, and Retraining

**Gale Thomas**

Soka Education: Leadership for Sustainable Development

Soka University of America

*February 11-12, 2006*

*"To be educators, requires teachers to be aware of and willing to put themselves at risk: at risk to care, to be rejected, and to fail (Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern, 1990)."*

## Introduction

I am honored to be a participant in this unique and timely conference; and extend a sincere <u>thank</u> <u>you</u> for the opportunity. I am confident that this activity and your efforts will be an important step towards the advancement of Soka education.  I would like to address the topic of this conference, "Leadership for Sustainable Development," with an emphasis on education. In commenting on the importance of education, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi ( Bethel, 1989) noted that, "More than any other profession in the service of society, education is a complicated business, especially because it aims to foster character values (p.122)."  When discussing sustainable development from the perspective of human rights we acknowledge that every person has the right to an education that maximizes his or her potential; that is, a right to a good education by competent, broadly schooled and well trained teachers.

In our increasingly diverse world, <u>diverse</u> leadership for sustainable development, coupled with ongoing and expanded teacher training are required to meet the realities of multiple cultures and the new demography of  schools and world populations (Gay, 2000: Tatum, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Teacher empowerment  and renewal are also required to support and assist teachers in dealing with these realities coupled with the multiple and increasing demands placed on them (Simpson, 1990; Sockett et. al., 2001).

## Faculty Renewal towards Reviving the Spirit and Continuous Learning

Edwin Simpson (1990) noted that there is evidence that, " While professors need to develop their craft as much as any other professional group…teacher development and training alone may not be adequate to meet the demands and needs of  teachers and faculty in the 21st Century (p. 1)."  What they need in addition is "professional renewal" and faculty vitality (p 29). This means, in higher education, a systematic time to re-tool,

restore and reflect, apart from the sabbatical in the 7th year for those who survive to that point.  Other past and recent studies on the quality of teacher and faculty life (Boyer, 1987; 1990; Bennett, 1998; Thomas, 1996; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) "echo" the pressing and growing need for faculty renewal. For example, Ernest Boyer (1987) reported from his survey of 5,000 faculty and 4,500 undergraduates that,

"Many faculty were enthusiastic about satisfactions gained in teaching and claimed they would choose the same profession over again.  However, over 40% were less than enthusiastic about their work, and almost half would entertain accepting other academic or even non-academic positions if offered. …..Most professors teach most of the time, and large portions of them teach all of the time.  But teaching is not the activity that is most rewarded by the academic profession nor most valued by the system at large (pp.98-99)."

My own study on the quality of life of faculty at a southwestern research institution (Thomas, 1997) and more recent observations by James Bess (2000) suggested similar conclusions. Faculty in my study reported the need for renewal; for greater connections with their colleagues; a greater sense of integration with themselves and various aspects of their work and lives which they perceived as fragmented and thus less satisfying.

Of relevance and interest to the former findings is Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1837 address, titled "The American Scholar," which he delivered in Cambridge, Massachusetts to the Phi Beta Kappa Society.  In his address he commented on the social and educational events of the day that had come to shape and define the status and posture of the "American Scholar." With creative expression he employed a fable in which "the gods in the beginning divided Man into men, that he might be more helpful to himself (p.84)."  However, he argues that, "Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. (p.84)."  In parceling him (or in present times, *her*) in this manner, Emerson noted that:

"His original unit, this fountain of power, has been so disturbed to multitudes, has been so minutely subdivided and peddled out, that it is spilled into drops, and cannot be gathered.  The state of society is one in which the  members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many walking monsters,---a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man (p.85)".

To encourage and address the importance of incorporating faculty renewal in the academy, Simpson (1990) devised a "regenerative learning" and renewal model to, "assist with the important task of conserving what he considers, the most important resource in higher education—its faculty (p.30)."

My main contention is that there is a one-to-one relationship <u>between</u> student well-being, satisfaction, motivation and academic success; <u>and</u> teacher renewal, satisfaction, competency and training. Thus, if teachers are not adequately educated, renewed, and systematically trained for a diverse world, students' education, well-being, success, and potential for leadership may be seriously compromised. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and his successor and Founder of Soka Universities, Daisaku Ikeda (2001), and others (Gay, 2000) stressed the significant and long-term impact that teachers exert on students' lives. Thus, keeping a systematic informal and formal (via research) pulse on faculty and faculty life is essential.

I will focus my remaining comments and observations on the current need for expanded teacher training in higher education (and at all levels) and incorporate some of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's views on this matter. His perspective and proposals, while targeting postwar Japan, are both timeless and relevant to contemporary education at Soka universities, and in much of American higher education. I will conclude by raising questions which I view as relevant to the nature and future of education at Soka University of America.

<u>Teacher Training for Pedagogy</u>

The need for extended and expanded teacher training at all levels of education has been well documented (Sockett. et. al, 2001; Hammerness et. al. 2005). For example, Simpson (1990) noted that, "While it is reasonable to assume that professors---above all professions---- have knowledge about teaching and learning; this is <u>less</u> than more often the case. James Bess and his associates, in their book, *Teaching Alone, Teaching Together: Transforming the Structure of Teams for Teaching* (2000; p.8) noted that, "In most colleges and universities, the matching of tasks, talents, and temperaments has not been properly addressed in the past fifty years, as the complexities of the delivery of higher education services have become more profound (p.8)" [and more demanding]. He concluded that given this situation, most faculty members are not prepared and are less effective and satisfied than they might be.

An international panel of experts whose work and reputation demonstrated excellence in teaching noted that there is absent in most graduate education programs in the U.S. (and in the present teaching profession), "sufficient formal training of its teachers in pedagogy. Rather, large emphasis remains on <u>subject</u> matter and <u>content</u> knowledge with inadequate attention on pedagogy (Kreber, 2001).

Pedagogical learning requires adequate knowledge and practice in learning about effective methods for teaching increasingly diverse students and learners (Paulsen, 2001). Given the structure and traditional operating legacies of <u>most</u> graduate programs, teaching and research assistantships do not provide opportunities for the latter. Thus, as Maryellen Weimer (2001) bluntly put it, "The majority of college faculty are not well prepared to teach and acquire most of what they learn on the job (p.46)." This should not be looked upon with judgment as some if not many teachers do improve. . However, the rhetorical question is:

Should we be more adequately trained to become more effective teachers upon entering the academy (especially at a time when faculty are increasingly required to multi-task, invest more time with students, and do more beyond teaching and research)?

Although the radically viewed Japanese educator of his day, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), is most often cited regarding his theory of value creation and his articulation of purpose in education, he also had much to say about teachers and teacher preparation and training. In his book, *Education for Creative Living* ( Bethel,1989), he viewed children and students as invaluable and society's most precious investment. He voiced similar concerns and critiques as contemporary American educators and scholars regarding the status and limitations of education, and the need for teacher training for pedagogical knowledge and practice. For example, in Japan, during his time and tenure as principal, teacher and educator, he noted that:

"The urgent need is for a scientific scheme of training teacher candidates in educational theory from which stem technical principles, as well as providing practical how-to lessons in teaching. We cannot afford the uncertainty of having teachers blindly acquire skills over years of trial-and-error teaching any more than we can afford to be treated by barefoot doctors who have learned-how much, we do not know, solely from experience in the bush.. All things considered, the primary qualification for teachers in their own studies is that they understand practical techniques of teaching together with the fundamental educational principles upon which those techniques rest (p.108)."

Acknowledging that mastery of both subject matter and pedagogy require, "long years of training and study (p. 122)," Makiguchi urged that if we truly desire a broad cadre rather than a limited number of effective teachers, "We had better take lessons from the apprenticeship system and have our teachers put in a number of years of proper study and practical training under those who know what they are doing (p. 122)." He further stated that, "As valuable as children are, it is a tragedy that instruction of teachers has been patterned after material manufacturing and not the apprenticeship system (p.122)."

Makiguchi therefore insisted that emphasis be placed on three aspects of education to facilitate the movement of educators and Japanese society beyond the "naïve assumption that knowledge of curriculum is all that matters (p. 118)." He regarded the following three aspects as applicable to teachers, students and future teachers (p. 118): (1) General scholastics—command over subject matter and curricular content; (2) Preparatory techniques –methodology, to acquire experience and knowledge in teaching methodologies; and (3) Moral cultivation, character development and social consciousness and responsibility. Makiguchi regarded the latter of the three as the most essential role of teachers.

I would add a fourth dimension or aspect to Makiguchi's triadic emphasis in implementing effective education. This fourth is the acquisition of greater <u>teacher and</u> <u>student competency in cultural</u> (including gender, race, and ethnicity) and learning diversity. While perhaps of little to no relevance during Makiguchi's time and location, this fourth dimension is increasingly important and especially relevant in today's world for fostering global citizenry, <u>and</u> effective leadership in education and in other areas of sustainable development.

In elaborating on these points, in her book, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classic Reform in Liberal Education* (1997), Martha Naussbaum noted that, "Traditionalists frequently oppose the idea that we should cultivate and expand our humanity through interactions and exchanges with cultures and groups that have been historically regarded as different and unequal." (p.295). Thus she challenges contemporary liberal education to be not only <u>democratic</u> and <u>Socratic</u> (i.e. employing critical thinking and respectful argument and questioning) but also <u>pluralistic</u>—thereby providing an inclusion and understanding of different cultures and subcultures. She also noted that while it is, "relatively easy to construct a gentleman's education for a homogeneous elite; it is far more difficult to prepare peoples of highly diverse backgrounds for complex world citizenship (p.295)."

Founder of Soka University, Daisaku Ikeda (2001; pp. 100-01) challenges both students and faculty to model the essential elements of global citizenship which entail: (1) the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life; (2) the courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures and to <u>grow</u> from encounters with them and (3) the compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places. I submit that these essentials can best be achieved through expanded education and training for cultural competency.

In highlighting the increasing diversity in American society, recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2002) indicate that students of color comprised 39% of public school enrollments in 2000; and will constitute the majority of U.S. public school students in 2035. These data also reveal that the number of non-native English speakers in these schools doubled in the ten year period between 1985 and 1995 (Banks, et. al.) and is expected to increase substantially in the coming years.

Because most future teachers will be located in public rather than private schools, beyond learning subject matter, pedagogy, and modeling moral character, they must learn more about who their students are from a cultural perspective. Makiguchi noted that education purpose and effective teaching must emerge out of and connect to the life of the student (p.17). This necessitates not only knowledge and appreciation of students' culture and backgrounds; but also meaningful and adequate inclusion of their cultural contributions in curricula and in teaching and learning.

Huber (1997) and Gay (2000) described frameworks and practices that have been employed towards the development of "culturally responsive pedagogy (p. 131).  Huber et. al. notes that such pedagogy, "is not color-bound or language-specific but subsumes all diversities (thus including gender and gender preference) and requires sensitivity to and responsibility for all learners (p.131)."  The authors gave an example in which faculty teaching in **Block 1** at Wichita State University employed a cultural diversity teaching and learning model which had 13 knowledge base components for cultural competence. The first entailed students engaged in theory, policy and application through ethnographic research about their own culture and cultures around the globe.  In the second knowledge base component, students studied and engaged in class and field-based assignments regarding differences and similarities in the "psychosocial-cultural contexts of human growth and development (i.e. child rearing, gender identification, parenting etc.) in non-mainstream ethnic and racial cultures (Huber et. al, p. 131).

Peter Murrell and Mary Diez (1997) described a program  at Alverno College which they facilitated and experienced success in "training middle class suburban teachers to effectively work in ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse communities (p.113)." They achieved success by integrating classroom and field-based learning at various ethnic and racially diverse field sites (p.113). The main assumption underlying their approach was that, "effective teaching in culturally diverse communities requires multiple exposures to the educational lives and perspectives of the children <u>and</u> immersion in teaching practices in those communities. They also maintained that effective education programs incorporating meaningful diversity training will have teachers who demonstrate success in teaching and learning and programs that (p.115):  (1) are designed as integrative rather than as appendices or additions; (2) approach the knowledge acquisition of teachers as ongoing and grounded in both theory and practice; and (3) assist faculty in "critically interpreting the cultural politics of teaching and learning in diverse settings."

<u>Questions and  Implications for  Soka University Present and Future</u>

I began this discussion with the thesis that systematic attention to teacher well-being, renewal, and greater training in pedagogy and cultural diversity are essentials to fostering education and leadership for sustainable development. Various research  findings, examples and perspectives on these areas were presented.

I will now conclude with a few questions that may or may not have relevancy for present or future education at Soka University of America ( SUA).  First, to what extent is there a perceived <u>need</u> for faculty renewal and pedagogical training at SUA?  Second, if there is a need, can it be met? Shapiro and Levine (1999) and others (Cox & Richlin, 2004) have suggested that learning communities may be a partial response to facilitating teacher renewal and enhancing teaching and learning. These communities are "learner centered"

rather than "student" or "teacher" centered. A common definition of learning communities is that they entail smaller and more integrated environments in which:

"Any one of a variety of curricular structures that link together several existing courses—or actually restructure learning materials entirely—so that students have opportunities for deeper understanding and integration of the material they are learning; and more interaction with one another and their teachers as fellow participants in the learning enterprise (Gabelnick, MacGregor Matthews & Smith, 1990; p. 19; cited in Shapiro and Levine, 1999; p. 2).

Small campuses and courses like Core I and II help facilitate such communities.  However, more important than size and clusters is that education administrators are a vital part of the learning and training process (Simpson, 1990; Cox & Richlin); and that students are willing to take greater responsibility and assume a more active role in their own learning.  On this latter point, Makiguchi (1989; p. 104) observed that,

"There is a tendency to see the real importance of the teacher as a giver of notes." He further noted that, "Eliminating perfunctory lectures that can be gotten from reading would free teachers to focus on efforts to increase students' self-reliance;" and that "in future education, the shift will be away from the notion that a teacher must always be present or up in front of the class at all times (p.104)."

Makiguchi noted that the latter transition will facilitate meaningful educational reform; and will enable faculty to become more partners and collaborators in "value creating education for student, faculty and the entire educational community (p.106)."  Given this perspective, additional questions that may have implications for the future of teaching and learning at SUA concern the extent to which: (1) students desire to assume greater responsibility for their learning; (2) faculty are supportive of such; and (3) what this would mean and require for both students and faculty.

Additional important questions are: (1) What will be the impact of a formal tenure system on teaching and on building and maintaining greater community within and between faculty and students? and (2) What will be the emphasis of the SUA with regards to teaching, research and service?  A common finding is that while faculty invest extensive time in teaching and teaching preparation, and while institutions stress the importance of faculty investing more time in teaching and in learning about students and how they learn; research continues to be the primary factor or a factor of equal weight in the tenure and promotion process (Bennett, 1998; Kerber, 2001).

Ernest Boyer (1990) suggested that institutions invest in and promote scholarship and research around teaching, and dismiss the continuing rigid distinction between research and teaching since "scholarship exists

in all forms of academic work (p.2)." Thus given SUA's central emphasis on students' satisfaction and success; coupled with the extensive amount of time that faculty members invest in teaching and student life, should there be a formal development and support towards a scholarship of teaching? Also, given the critical role that many faculty assume in service to the university and the emphasis in Soka philosophy on service to humanity and community, should there also  be a scholarship of service that has tangible rewards towards faculty advancement?

Finally, what will be the nature and face of future student and faculty demographics at SUA; and what role will or can SUA play in graduate education; and in training students and future faculty for cultural and global diversity?  Discussion and response to these questions seemingly have important implications for how SUA will continue to articulate its mission and how and what it will be best known for in the academy.  Will it be known solely as an institution that fosters global leaders for peace? Or, will it be known  in addition as one that excels in faculty development and renewal; and/or in making a significant contribution in training future teachers in pedagogy and cultural competency?  Whatever the direction, the noted educator and scholar,  Nel Noddings noted that, schools that organize themselves around  themes and culture of care, moral education and the welfare of students must "be clear and unapologetic" about their goals towards fostering competent, "caring and happy students."

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# The Role of Language Education in Sustainable Development

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The threats to survival of citizens around the world seem to increase day by day. Issues such as hunger, abuses to human rights, endangerment of species and nature and military conflicts, among others, are part of our reality, even for those who only see the consequences through the media (Ikeda, 2001). It is no secret that the way of life in countries such as the United States has become less sustainable throughout time (Noddings, 2005). If we continue these trends of overconsumption we will need more than one planet Earth for the human species to survive. And yet it would not be enough. Therefore, now more than ever it is necessary to come up with a practical yet sustainable solution (Noddings, 2005).

The definition of sustainable development is broad in that it includes economical, ecological, social and educational aspects of sustainability (Ikeda, 2001). Thus, there are many different ways to approach the issue of creating more sustainable communities. What is clear is the need of united efforts among governmental leaders and citizens throughout the world to achieve this goal. Communication, consequently, plays an important role in the progress of creating a sustainable way of life around the globe.

However, interpersonal communication has diminished with the appearance of instrumental and functional communication. People communicate in terms of their roles more frequently than in terms of their common humanity. Fortunately enough, different social movements around the world share a vision of development based on dialogue. Dialogue should be the foundation of societal communication. It should be the connection among people as well as between people and their governmental leaders. In the end, development is impossible to achieve without communication (Mowlana, 1996).

Global communication generates the discourse of sustainable development. People throughout the world are continuously affected by the process of globalization. Indeed, globalization has in many ways diminished the sustainability of communities around the world. However, those who are most affected do not have a chance to participate in the debate on this issue (Stiglitz, 2002 in Noddings, 2005). In order to apply the ideals of sustainable development it is important to have a clear understanding of how issues such as globalization affect our lives and the lives of others (Noddings, 2005).

There is a need to foster a global way of thinking (Noddings, 2005). One way to go about this is through the incorporation of a multilingual and multicultural curriculum in educational institutions. Through the

experience of learning a second language, students can develop awareness and an imaginary empathy towards people from other countries. This should be a humanistic curriculum in which issues affecting people of the world are introduced in a creative way (Otieno, 2004). It is a great opportunity for students to develop the ability to express themselves about world issues in another language.

In sum, we argue that to achieve sustainable development we need to build a global community based on communication. Moreover, communication is always conducted in some form of language (Mowlana, 1996). Thus, we believe the incorporation of a humanistic multilingual curriculum can be the starting point for the development towards a global community. We also wish to clarify the role of the Soka educator in the context of language education.

<p style="text-align:center;">Building a global community</p>

Events such as September 11 have affected the way people perceive the world (McKenzie, 2004). For many, the image of a true global community is inconceivable. What is more, many people associate negative images with the concept of global society (Titus, 2003). This is the result of how the process of globalization has had, in many ways, negative repercussions on people's lifestyles in communities around the world (Palacios, 2004). This has indeed developed into mistrust and animosity among communities and nation states.

In addition, technological advances, characteristic of the process of globalization, have caused the loss of interpersonal communication as the main mode of communication. Today, it is mostly mass media that controls government-citizen communication. In addition, these technological advances have evoked a more abstracted rather than interpersonal or associative ways of communication. This has pulled cultures and communities around the world apart from one another (Mowlana, 1996).

Now more than ever we need to draw attention to the significance of building a sense of community among citizens of the world (McKenzie, 2004). The base of a global community should be as Titus (2003) says, "an active understanding of global interdependence" (p. 28). We need to actively recognize how our daily activities affect other people throughout the world. We must promote a shift of consciousness that channels in a positive way the technological, economical and social changes the world has experienced throughout the past century (Titus, 2003). Furthermore, it is within this kind of community that we can foster true global citizens who can develop a keen understanding of the interconnection between people and our environment (McKenzie, 2004).

Community, as defined by Mowlana (1996), entails a stream of information or communication network that can even surpass national boundaries. The relationship between individuals and the flow of information, Mowlana continues, is the core of community building. Without this relationship, communities would not exist. A community is also often characterized by a shared common purpose. Individuals within their

communities work together to achieve a set of shared goals (McKenzie, 2004). A humanistic global community should come together with the shared goal of achieving a sustainable development.

The citizens of the world should develop an empathy that surpasses countries and territories. Instead of extensive individualism, these citizens should have a clear awareness of how the way they live affects others throughout the world (McKenzie, 2004). Moreover, they should have a sense of responsibility in working together for the benefit of the entire planet.

Usually any kind of development, as explained by Mowlana (1996), depends on strategies or governmental plans. But less often, she argues, is there reference to community building in terms of communication. What is more, the relationship between development and communication is frequently taken for granted. In reality though, as the author suggests, communication and development, rather than interrelated, are inseparable terms. More specifically, there is an overarching importance for dialogue as a way of communication to develop sustainable communities.

McKenzie (2004) suggests that the creation of a true global community can be initiated at schools. Educational settings, he says, can serve as miniatures of global communities. Schools should foster appreciation towards the world and its inhabitants (Ikeda, 2001). This is possible through developing a curriculum that connects students' experiences with what they learn in the classroom. Ultimately, students should be able to relate global issues with their day to day lives.

Communication is a key point in building a global community. Furthermore, communication is always carried out in some form of language. As Mowlana (1996) states "language is the 'basic stuff' of human interactions" (p.103). Therefore, a curriculum of multilingualism and multicultural literacy, we argue, are essentially beneficial to achieve a kind of active empathy. The ability to express well-thought opinions and contributions towards the discussion on sustainable development in a second language opens the door to a way of communication that can go beyond geographical boundaries. It gives students an opportunity to connect with people from different cultures. In addition, they can exchange the struggles of sustainability from their own communities (McKenzie, 2004).

Learning a second language can help students understand the interrelation among different people, places and environments around the world. Moreover, they can develop an idea of how this interconnection has consequences on a global scale (Titus, 2003). It is possible to develop a better understanding of and respect for other cultures through learning their specific language. The result is an acknowledgement of our common humanity and thinking creatively of how to create value out of these cultural differences (Titus, 2003). A humanistic multicultural and multilingual curriculum can help to develop a channel of communication shaped with respect and appreciation towards other cultures.

In the first half of this paper, we have attempted to draw a connection between each student's educational/formative experience and the role of greater global communication in curricula that broaden the student's sense of interconnectedness. These principles are some of the bedrock assumptions in Makiguchi's theory of Soka education. Bethel's (1989) discussion reminds us that at the core of Value Creation Pedagogy is a person whose "existence centers in creating value that enhances to the fullest both personal life and the network of interdependent relationship that constitute[s] the individual's communal life" (p. 6)

Previously, we argued that students who are multilingual and multi-competent in communication strategies can have a greater appreciation for the interconnectedness of modern life. As Crystal (2001) alludes to, English is the growing lingua franca of international interaction. The remainder of this paper will problematize English's role as an international language. We hope to demonstrate that the use of English as an international medium is not an uncomplicated undertaking, devoid of controversy, but rather is a complex and multifaceted discussion, couched in a global context. By doing this, we aim to prescribe caveats for English teachers that reference their role in this discussion and remind us of the true role of the teacher in Soka education.

The benefits of becoming multilingual were outlined in the first half of this paper. There is, however, a rich body of research concerned with the problems of a single language becoming hegemonic and oppressive. In this vein, the proliferation of English is criticized as being perhaps linguistically imperialistic. Language educators should fulfill the needs of their students in language education, but what reference can be made to the complexities of these students' needs?

Bhatia (2001), in a discussion of the power of genre and discourse communities, reminds us that generic conventions and assumptions serve as gate-keeping devices that necessitate a linguistic and stylistic code for entry. Bhatia defines genres as "media through which members of professional or academic communities communicate with each other" (p. 65).  Though Bhatia's emphasis is on the academic community, the same sort of gate-keeping associated with generic proscriptions is evident in business and politics. English learners must acquaint themselves with these generic conventions in order to fully participate in their discourse. For the purposes of this paper, it is noteworthy to mention that, before even discussions of generic convention, the first gate through which those wishing to enter these genres must pass is that of English competency.

Participation in these discourses and genres could lead to greater agency for nonnative English speaking peoples. Greater access to employment and participation in the market economy of the United States, Great Britain and Australia generally necessitates participation in the vernacular discourse of English. Considering the fact that the United States is responsible for the lion share of the world's pollution, implications for sustainable development are obvious. It may also logically follow that parties wishing to subvert and criticize

these very structures of U.S. ecological disaster would benefit from fluency in the English economic idiom. From this brief introduction, we can see that the benefits of English education are highly political and that English education, more broadly, is a **high-stakes** undertaking.

English education and use represent a highly interlaced process of politics, postcolonial criticism and global interaction. Though each English learner brings his or her own unique set of values and motivations to the English learning task, it is difficult to see the process of English education as anything other than a highly politicized and value-laden undertaking. If sustainable development is to be a reality and flourish as a concept, a sense of interconnectedness and a respect for and valuation of multilingualism and/or multi-discourse literacy, at least at the level of policy creation, must be central values of education. Bearing this in mind, we turn our attention to the role of the Soka educator.

In *Education for Creative Living* we see some of Makiguchi's proscriptions for emergent teachers. He cites the need for teachers to be cognizant of the "current topics" (p. 107) of the world as being "common sense" (p. 107). The premise of this paper is that these "current topics" are the role of language in global-minded education. Compare Makiguchi's interpretation of the role of a teacher to Pennycook's (1994) reading of the opinions that the English-as-an-international-language debate encompasses the "Natural, Neutral and Beneficial Spread of English" (p. 7). We've previously seen that this theory may be unduly dismissive of the charges of language hegemony leveled against English. Makiguchi's pronouncements and criteria for the selection of a good teacher are best understood in their contextualized milieu (pre-war Japan), but we feel that generalizations about what Makiguchi emphasized are key tenets of a contemporary understanding of Soka education.

## Conclusion

Where lays the intersection between sustainable development, global citizenry, language competency and Soka Education? We hope to have demonstrated that the connection between these variables is a complicated balance of empowerment, global interconnectedness and compassion. Regarding empowerment specifically, Daisaku Ikeda, founder of Soka University, has said "To be effective, education for sustainability must be rooted in a deep faith in humanity — the determination to awaken human agency through the interlocking processes of learning, reflection and empowerment" (Ikeda, 2004). In this way, Ikeda calls Soka educators to action. It's this very faith in humanity that lays at the intersection of sustainable development, global citizenry, language competency and Soka Education.

We have argued several points in this paper. First, that interconnectedness is the foundation of sustainable development, and that that foundation is one best built upon a deep-seated respect for multilingualism. Second, we argued that educators must be aware of the issues surrounding English as a global language, and

must make such resources of information available to the students. As per Ikeda above, empowerment in this sense means educating about the dominant discourses of English. Education about these discourses enables participation therein.

Participation in these discourses – including, at a fundamental level, cognizance of their nature and their power – is one way in which sustainable development becomes real. In regard to sustainable development, Ikeda says, "Because sustainable development is such a comprehensive concept, it can provide the links across otherwise nonconversant bodies of knowledge" (Ikeda, 2004). These "bodies of knowledge" are more various than ecology and environmental activism. They bisect politics, economics, sociology, the humanities, etc. Therefore, the discourses of English are directly linked to sustainable development because the English speaking world is, in part, made up of some of the most polluting, economically active, resource-wise, avaricious and militarily powerful regimes on the planet. The participation of these nations in sustainable development is the key. However hard-fought it may be,  language is the first step towards dialog and consensus.

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# Fostering Positive Human Relations through the

# Language and Culture Program

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Introduction

Generations of Soka educators, especially Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda, and Daisaku Ikeda, have had a firm belief that education can produce a new kind of person who is able to make humanistic contributions to making the world a better place for all people to live. Soka University of America is a materialization of their ideals. Teachers at SUA shoulder the responsibility of helping to ensure that the students will realize their own dreams as well as those of the abovementioned Soka education pioneers. In this paper, I will discuss my approaches of encouraging students to look at things from different perspectives, to think critically, and to take the initiative to establish and maintain positive relations with other people. On a small scale, this could be the relations among students themselves and between students and teachers; on a lager scale, this could be the relations between peoples of different countries and religions. This is especially important in Chinese language classes because most of our students of Chinese are Japanese nationals. They will study abroad in China and sometimes experience unfriendly treatment from Chinese people, due to historical and political reasons. In and outside of my classes, we discuss questions of China-Japan relations, and I support students in their efforts to contribute to the friendship between the two nations and in developing positive relations with Chinese people well beyond their lives at SUA.

Ponder over the puzzles together with students

The matter of establishing and maintaining positive human relations is immediate for our Chinese classes at SUA simply because most students who take Chinese are Japanese nationals or descendents of same. They choose to study Chinese for different reasons. The common reasons, as far as I can see, include but are not limited to the fact that the founder of SUA, Mr. Daisaku Ikeda, played a significant role in improving relations between the two nations. Our students want to follow in his footsteps to contribute to the positive relations he established. Secondly, some students' grandfathers were footsoldiers in the Japanese invasion of China. They witnessed what the Japanese army did in China and were rescued by Chinese people when their troops were defeated. They survived to tell stories to younger generations, and strove to mend friendships between the two peoples. Thirdly, students see China's growing influence in the world and want to learn more about it. They also want to contribute to improving relations between China and Japan and China and the United States. Whatever their reasons for studying in China, students with a Japanese background all have the same concern before they go: "Am I going to be in trouble just because I am Japanese?" Nevertheless, our students have still bravely gone to China despite this concern, and the experiences of the first two batches of study abroad students proved to be constructive and encouraging, though some of them did experience different levels of difficulties.

Most SUA study abroad students successfully established a positive relationship with the Chinese people they met. In communicating with their Chinese roommates, language partners and host families, our students showed that they were hard-working and compassionate human beings. They were mature and strong enough to deal with unfriendly or even hostile behavior, and in the end won the trust and respect of their Chinese hosts. From the post-study abroad questionnaires that our Study Abroad Office collected, we learned that one way or another many students in fact experienced unfriendly treatment, but they managed to overcome their difficulties in the end. When asked what was the single most important piece of advice they would give their underclassmen, the answer was "sincerity." With this kind of attitude, they connected themselves to other human beings. Almost all returnees have had good friends and Chinese parents that they have kept in touch with, and quite a few of them want to work in China or in a field where they can contribute to China's

global relations.

At the same time, our students were puzzled and worried to see very negative things, such as corrupt officials in many places, and the lack of basic public morality. Many things they saw did not match China's image as the fastest growing economy in the world. Out of respect for the Chinese people, some students shied away from criticizing the problems they observed, considering them to be "internal affairs of China" as informed by their Chinese friends. Some Japanese people, perhaps including our students' grandfathers, felt that the Japanese were guilty of killing Chinese people during WWII while the Chinese government didn't even officially ask for compensation, so they did not "interfere with the internal affairs of China." The course, Contemporary Issues of China, taught in the fall semester, in addition to addressing questions that students brought back from China, exposed our students to many more problems than they could possibly encounter during their study abroad period. Furthermore, it reminded students how important it is for people who know and care about China, such as themselves, to provide help and support to resolve these problems. The issues we covered were broad, such as education, youth, citizens' rights and obligations, problems of peasants and rural areas, freedom of the press, environmental degradation and sustainable development. Through classroom discussion, students were better informed from each other's experiences and insights and the perspectives of Chinese scholars, activists and ordinary people, so that they could further appreciate the complexity of current issues in China and the importance of study abroad. They considered their options as to improve the situation in China. Some of them wanted to go back to work there in order to help Chinese people directly, while others called for international attention to help resolve the problems. I encouraged my students to observe, study, understand and help China as though helping a friend. Students realized, with the rapid process of globalization and their pursuit of global citizenship, that the problems were not just "theirs" but "our own." As a result, the students probably left the class with more questions than answers, but they also reaffirmed their commitment to help improve Chinese people's lives and the relations between China, Japan, and the US.

Support students' efforts to improve relations between two countries

A real ordeal came in spring 2005, when Chinese resentment against Japan rose very high, and

several anti-Japanese protests broke out in big cities in China. Our third batch of students were studying in China at the time. The atmosphere was heavy on campus because we were concerned about the worsening relationship between China and Japan in general, and our students' safety in particular. We learned from the internet and from newspapers that protesters called for the withdrawal of Japanese history textbooks that distorted the facts of Japanese invasion and massacre of China during WWII, denial of Japanese entry into the UN Security Council, and boycotts of Japanese products. Angry crowds attacked the Japanese Embassy and Japanese businesses. A few Japanese students were hurt in Shanghai. We dedicated an entire class period to discussing this situation in Introduction to Chinese Literature and Film, even though that was not directly related to the subject of the class. We also read emails written by students who were currently studying in China, who felt scared, frustrated and angry to see the positive relations that they worked so hard to build up and maintain break right in front of their eyes. Because all students in this class were returnees from study abroad in China and Taiwan, and they all developed emotional attachments to the Chinese people in the places they studied, they felt sad and concerned. My understanding is that even though the protest was triggered by current events such as Japan's application for entry into the UN Security Council, the real momentum lay in many internal conflicts, allowing for people to vent their anger on the Japanese. Our students wanted to do something but didn't know what to do. I also wanted to do something to remind my fellow Chinese that violence against innocent Japanese people and businesses would not resolve the historical and political problems between the two nations, and thus decided to show the Chinese our students' writing.

I selected four good essays written by students in my class, added an introductory paragraph, and posted them on two popular Chinese websites, one in China, and the other in the US. The introductory paragraph said:

"I am teaching Chinese language and culture at an American university. In the Introduction to Chinese Literature and Film course I've been teaching this semester, quite a few students are Japanese. They all went to study abroad in China before they took this course and they love China and the Chinese people. The essays I am presenting here were written for the class, not for a public audience, and the ideas and sentiments came from

sincerity from the bottom of their hearts with sincerity. Through them, I see friends of the Chinese people among the younger generations of Japanese, and good prospects for relations between China and Japan. I obtained their consent to share their papers with my fellow Chinese. Although these students' writing skills are not very sophisticated, the messages they send through these essays are encouraging, and are worthwhile for our deep reflecting."

Of the four essays, one student tells the story of her late grandpa who used to be a footsoldier in the Japanese army during Japan's invasion of China. From his own experience, he realized that Chinese people were friends and tried to promote friendships between the two countries. He obviously had an impact on his granddaughter, who was then doing her best for the same cause. Another student wrote about his experience of making himself a global citizen. He learned several languages and made friends in different countries. When he first began studying in China, he was treated with hostility, but when his ability to use the Chinese language improved, he was accepted by the Chinese and made many friends. One of his friends told him that, "I disliked Japanese in the past, but you have changed my view of Japanese people." He realized the importance of language and culture and decided to go to graduate school so that he could contribute to international cultural communication. The third paper was about Chinese literature and contemporary life. In her article, the student explained and analyzed various pieces written by Chinese authors. She showed how a Japanese student understood and appreciated Chinese literature and how she was touched and encouraged by the humanism expressed in the works. The fourth article talked about the strength of living in Chinese literature and how Chinese authors motivated their readers, including Japanese students, to think seriously and to live a meaningful life.

These articles were posted on a very popular intellectual website http://www.tianyaclub.com in China on April 26, 2005 and on the most visited Chinese language website in the United States, http://www7.chinesenewsnet.com on April 24, 26, 28 and 30, 2005 so the readers had a whole week to read these articles, the last still posted until May 1st. A friend of mine emailed me saying "good work by your Japanese students. I will forward this to Chinese BBS on-line." As a result, these articles have reached thousands of Chinese, provoking thought and touching their hearts just as Chinese literature had inspired the Japanese students. SUA students tried very hard to prepare

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themselves to be global citizens, and these students were doing were global citizens were supposed to do: contributing to positive relationships between two nations and to world peace.

<u>Give honest opinions when needed</u>

To get to know students better so as to teach and help them more effectively, I tried to participate in some students' activities, especially discussions related to China. Once, I attended a discussion on Sunday night. Students read and discussed Mr. Ikeda's speech at Beijing University in 1989. One of the students noticed the timing was shortly after the Tiananmen Square incident. While most countries condemned China or refused to engage in open political discussion, Mr. Ikeda wanted to strengthen his relations with the nation. I knew that was one of the significant moments when students needed our help and clarification. I agreed with the student that the timing was important and Mr. Ikeda was there to show his support, but the question was to whom. Although he didn't explicitly claim where his support went, I would interpret that it went to the students and the people but not to the government, because he delivered his speech at Beijing University, where students initiated the pro-democracy movement, and he praised the friendship between the Chinese and Japanese. Mr. Ikeda made great contributions to normalize diplomatic relations between China and Japan, and he was the leader who promoted Chinese/Japanese friendship in non-governmental circles. He was a good friend of late Chinese premier Zhou Enlai, but this would in no way lead him to support the government that ordered the army to kill their own people. This was simply against pacifism and his idea of friendship between people.

In his letter for SUA's first commencement ceremony, Mr. Ikeda wrote: "Youth! You are young. Your youth itself gives you the greatest strength. With this awareness, we should exert, refine and develop ourselves." That was why he "firmly pledged to build a center of higher education that would enable the principles of value-creating education to contribute to the peace and happiness of humankind." All young people have the great strength of youth, which can be led in any direction. What we can contribute to this "center of higher education" is to help students in the process of "exerting, refining and developing" themselves according to "the principles of value-creation." I am glad to see that through our study abroad program and the language classes—especially the

post-study abroad ones—students were encouraged and convinced that they could do something in the real world to improve relations between the two countries, even if they were only students. This helped to prepare students to live a contributive life after their graduation from SUA.

## Education for a Sustainable Future

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Soka Education: Leadership for Sustainable Development

Soka University of America

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### Introduction

The United Nations (UN) designated the 10 years between 2005 and 2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.  The conceptualization of this campaign can be traced back to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit) which took place in Rio de Janeiro in June, 1992. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21, the greatest achievement of the Rio Earth Summit, outlined the importance of "promoting education, public awareness and training."[i]  This is based on the UN's deposition that "education and learning lie at the heart of approaches to sustainable development."  In this analysis, I will introduce the fundamental concept of Soka Education,[ii] founded by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi,[iii] and examine how it resonates with the UN-initiated Education for Sustainable Development in three different aspects: 1) the actors that engage in education, 2) their recognition of interconnectedness, and 3) respect towards life.  These two educational approaches both establish principles to foster world citizens, which are, in the beginning of this century, being observed in various academic programs and educational institutions.  However, I will demonstrate how Soka Education is different from Education for Sustainable Development, and perhaps other educational approaches, by explaining the depth of the concept of interconnectedness and the origination of this educational theory, which was aimed at the happiness of the individual.

### Education for Sustainable Development

The term sustainable development first appeared in a report for the United Nations World Commission of Environment and Development in 1987, defining it as "development that meets the needs of the present

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[i] All sources from the United Nations and related entities are extracted from the United Nations official web resource.

[ii] Throughout this paper I will refer to Soka University of America's founder Daisaku Ikeda's educational ideals as Soka Education, developed on the basis of the educational theory established by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi in his *Education for Creative Living*.

[iii] Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1887-1944): A Japanese educator who developed theories on the creation of value and established the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, or the Value-Creation Education Society (1930).  He proposed a reform in the Japanese education system and was imprisoned by the military government as a thought criminal.  His educational pedagogy is practiced in various institutions today in countries such as Brazil, Singapore, and the United States.

without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This concept is extremely relevant in a society with an increasing number of individuals who are struggling to understand and care about the future of human beings and the earth. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that education for sustainable development "is a life-wide and lifelong endeavour which challenges individuals, institutions and societies to view tomorrow as a day that belongs to all of us, or it will not belong to anyone."

The 1992 Rio Earth Summit was a starting point in promoting the concept of sustainable development worldwide in the realm of education, crystallizing its goals in the form of Agenda 21. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 titled *Promoting Education, Public Awareness, and Training* stated that:

> Education … should be recognized as a process by which human beings and societies can reach their fullest potential. Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues. …education [is] indispensable to changing people's attitudes so that they have the capacity to assess and address their sustainable development concerns.

The emphasis of this chapter is to foster values of sustainability in various organizations—regional or international—such as schools, governments, UN entities, and industrial associations.

It is important to note that the concept of sustainability further evolved to incorporate human and social aspects of development, for instance, social justice and poverty issues, by the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. It was in this occasion that the summit proposed the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (extending from the year 2005 to 2014) and designated UNESCO to set quality standards to lead this movement. While acknowledging that the implementation of the proposed principles may vary in different cultural and geographical regions and in their priorities and approaches, UNESCO established the following as the core values to be promulgated in Education for Sustainable Development:

> -Respect for the dignity and human rights of all people throughout the world and a commitment to social and economic justice for all;
> -Respect for the human rights of future generations and a commitment to intergenerational responsibility;
> -Respect and care for the greater community of life in all its diversity which involves the

protection and restoration of the Earth's ecosystems;

-Respect for cultural diversity and a commitment to build locally and globally a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace.

The basis of such educational principles lies in the explicit understanding that the problems we face today are integrated and that a holistic and interdisciplinary approach is required for a sustainable solution for our common future.

UNESCO aims to realize such educational goals through addressing three major areas of study: society, environment, and economy. Through understanding our relationship with others and the larger social and natural world, the organization seeks to cultivate values that center on respect: respect for others (including those yet to be born), diversity, the environment, and resources of our planet.

UNESCO recognizes that such education should not be condensed into one course on sustainability, but that all disciplines of study should approach their various topics from the standpoint of sustainable development. It also recognizes that such education should not be conducted only inside the classrooms. It asserts that "everyone is a stakeholder in education for sustainable development," since the issue affects everyone in some way or another, and therefore, encourages life-long learning in formal, informal, and non-formal contexts, engaging various institutions.

## Makiguchi, an Earth Citizen, and His Perception of the World

More than a century before the UN-initiated Education for Sustainable Development was established, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, a twentieth-century Japanese educator, proposed a theory of education that held similar values. Makiguchi, in his early years, looked into the study of geography as a means to approach education. He perceived that no human activity can take place disregarding our relationship with the environment and that the social problems of his time emerged because people neglected this point. The relationship between humans and the environment, or the "geography of human life" as Makiguchi called it, was one of the foundations on which he built his philosophy of education.

His educational pedagogy, known as Soka or value-creating pedagogy, sought to cultivate an awareness of life's interconnectedness, while aiming to bring out the potential dormant in each individual. He established life as the ultimate value and that the ultimate creation of value is congruent with the establishment of the inviolate dignity of life.

Makiguchi examined his relationship with others and the environment in three different contexts: the world, country, and homeland, based on his realization of being a citizen of the earth. Makiguchi started his

*Geography of Human Life* by examining his relationship with the world. He described how, although he had never stepped out of his country, he was connected with the world and was in debt to the people of the world and the earth's ecosystem.

He demonstrated this by looking at the clothes he was wearing and the various objects that were not made in his home country, but that had sustained his life throughout the years. The wool cloth he wore was produced in South America or Australia and later traveled to England to be processed by British laborers with their coal and mines. The sole of his shoes were made of leather produced in America, while the rest of the parts were made of leather produced in India. Contemplating the process through which these materials came to his place—from the raising of livestock, processing of the raw material, transporting it, to selling it—Makiguchi was astounded at the vast time and space which were a part of his life.

However, Makiguchi's chain of thought did not stop there. His understanding of the world allowed him to see Indian people perspiring profusely under the hot sun, growing the cotton plants. He thought about the herd-boy, who provided him with milk when he was an infant, and developed a deep appreciation toward this person he never met in his life. Depicting the interdependence of one's life to the world, country, and homeland, Makiguchi elucidated how one is indebted to the environment around him or her and concluded that having a "deeper understanding of life and nature...is...essential for living a fulfilling and rewarding life" (22).

Makiguchi's view on education was based on the understanding of the interconnectedness and the sanctity of life, and was to result in a positive change in the larger world by increasing numbers of individuals awakened to this reality. Makiguchi's approach to education, in other words, sought to foster world citizens who live a contributive life, capable of "grasp[ing] with penetrating insight … the true nature of the world around them" (22).

Daisaku Ikeda, in his speech at Teachers College in Columbia University in 1986, recognizing Makiguchi to have possessed a vision of global citizenship, raised three vital elements for global citizenship:

-The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.

-The courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures and to grow from encounters with them.

-The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places. (Ikeda, 100-101)

Here, we can find the unchanging, central building blocks of Soka Education.

Comparison between Education for Sustainable Development and Soka Education for World Citizens

Many of Makiguchi's values coincide with the educational goals of the UN-initiated Education for Sustainable Development.  Here, I examine three major points that these two ideas have in common: 1) the actors taking part in the education, 2) the realization of interconnectedness, and 3) respect for life.

The first commonality is that both UNESCO and Makiguchi acknowledge that "everyone is a stakeholder in education," because education deals with issues relevant to people's lives.  UNESCO, as mentioned earlier, seeks to engage various entities to promote the concept of sustainability in formal and non-formal ways.  Makiguchi proposed an educational system in which schools establish partnerships with the larger community to form an ideal learning environment for the students.  He stated in his preface to *Education for Creative Living* that a value-creating education aims

> "[T]o bring education in line with real-life work activities" and "called for special balance of …training under the guidance of professionals in society at large" (x).

UNESCO also assures that the Education for Sustainable Development is applicable to one's personal daily life.  Likewise, Makiguchi asserted that "the purpose of education … must be in agreement with the needs and the goals of the individual" (19).  Therefore, the two educational principles regard education as "an ongoing lifelong process" (Makiguchi, 155).  They involve a variety of actors to be engaged in the educational process, because one's life takes place in society and consists of interactions with the society.

The second common trait lies in the realization of interconnectedness.  In today's globalizing world, it is hard to overlook the interdependent relationships among nations, societies, organizations, and individuals with the increasing amount of exchanges of goods, ideas, money, information, and people across borders.  Makiguchi asserted that "interdependence is an inevitable and a desirable course for all of us" (12).  However, interconnectedness can be beneficial and at the same time be detrimental.  With this understanding, Education for Sustainable Development aspires to address the challenges that result from the interconnectedness of social, economical, and environmental conditions.  Thus, UNESCO addresses not only the issue of environmental protection, but also the issues of poverty, social justice, and peace, in order for the entire world to advance toward a sustainable future.

The third major commonality is respect for life.  UNESCO holds four core values of Education for Sustainable Development, which are: the respect for the dignity and human rights of all people, respect for future generations, respect for the greater community of life, and the respect for cultural diversity.  Ikeda asserts that Makiguchi's educational ideal was to "teach youth to uphold the sanctity of life" (xi).  In an

address at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, he declared, "the ultimate goal of Soka…education is to foster people of character who continuously strive for the greatest good—that of peace—who are committed to protecting the sanctity of life..."(Ikeda, 115).

We may interpret these approaches to education as aiming to foster world citizens that regard global problems as related to oneself and, with a sense of unity, act towards its solution. In this light, Education for Sustainable Development and Soka Education both serve as a valuable guide in today's world.

<u>What Distinguishes Soka Education</u>

As much as Makiguchi's educational ideals have in common with the UN's educational goals, Makiguchi's approach has some significant aspects worthy of expounding on. Here, I will share two major ways in which I believe Soka Education differs. One is the depth of the recognition of life's interrelatedness. The other is the origination of his educational ideas.

The term 'interconnectedness' as employed by the UN has a rather practical meaning: it is the cause of complex global issues, in which only by taking a holistic approach can we solve the problems. The term is employed as an explanation of a causal relationship in which a change in one place at one time may have a positive or negative effect in another place at a another time.

However, interconnectedness for Soka Education does not merely allude to the intertwined nature of social environmental problems, but to the inseparable nature of the self, others, and the environment. In other words, it is the interconnectedness of life. Ikeda finds the basis of interconnectedness in a Buddhist perspective of the world and refers to it as "the interdependence and interpenetration of all phenomena" (101).

In the light of this philosophy, we can transcend all differences that seemingly separate us from others, such as race, nationality, gender, and form. Makiguchi posited,

> Can anything be more important, then, than to discover how to plan educational experiences which will enable every person to develop this deeper understanding of life and nature which is so essential for living a fulfilling and rewarding life? (22)

By cultivating such wisdom to perceive the profound relationship of our lives with others and the environment, one can develop great care not only for the present but also for the future livelihood of the earth and its inhabitants.

The second and most significant difference of the two educational philosophies lies in their inception. Education for Sustainable Development was established in response to the world's degrading social environmental condition, whereas Soka Education was created in consideration of the individual's happiness. UNESCO sees Education for Sustainable Development as a "tool for addressing important questions" pertaining to such topics as environment, development, human rights, and social justice. Education for Sustainable Development, in the view of scientists, governmental officials, and environmental experts, is a way to resolve the calamities our globe is facing, whereas Soka Education, proposed by educators, is a way to resolve struggles faced by individuals in their respective lives. Makiguchi's conviction was that education was for the happiness of the learner and that education must consist of "what children find relevant, or interesting or even comprehensive during their formative years" (Makiguchi, 21).

Soka Education was founded upon Makiguchi's thirty years of experience as an instructor and principal, "grinding out ideas (x)" on how to enable children to live lives of greatest value. Questioning the educational system of his time, Makiguchi asked,

> What then is the purpose of national education? Rather than devise complex theoretical interpretations, it is better to start off by looking to the lovely child who sits on your knee and ask yourself: What can I do to assure that this child will be able to lead the happiest life possible? (Ikeda, 10)

Makiguchi established that happiness is the purpose of education, which is a state of becoming, rather than "a fixed mark to be achieved" (23). Recognizing that happiness, or individual well-being, "entails cooperative and contributive existence within society," he concluded that "[t]rue happiness comes only through sharing in the trials and successes of other persons and of our community" (Makiguchi, 24).

Although the educational goals and principles outlined by Education for Sustainable Development and Soka Education appear to be similar, it is important to distinguish their foundations. Soka Education was founded on the purpose of individual happiness, while Education for Sustainable Development was founded in response to the needs of the society. The concept of interconnectedness in the value of Soka affirms that the well-being of the society is a requisite for individual happiness, and that the unhappiness of others relate to the unhappiness of the self. Therefore, ideally, individuals involved in Soka Education will work naturally towards the happiness of others, perceiving the others' happiness as their own.

## "A Society that Serves Education" rather than "Education that serves Society"

Many agree that education is the long-term solution to all global issues. However, it is also education that creates hatred among people and divides people from others and nature. Therefore, to deeply contemplate on what kind of values education should seek to instill in the learners and a clear understanding of the purpose of doing so is imperative. As a central value, Education for Sustainable Development, as well as Quality Education and Education for Human Rights promoted by the UN, all assess the interconnectedness of our lives. The purpose of such education is dedicated to the well-being of a larger community.

In Soka Education, education is for the happiness of the learner. This is the point in which Makiguchi's theory of education greatly differs from the UN-initiated Education for Sustainable Development and other institutions which aim to produce capable people who can contribute to the enhancement of society. One may argue, however, that if Makiguchi were living today, he would have called for an educational reform in response to the degrading environmental conditions we see. However, I would put that Makiguchi, although concerned for the state of the world, would still place the happiness of the individual as the center of his undertaking.

Makiguchi was strongly against the Japanese educational system of his time, which was controlled by the military government who promoted imperialistic and nationalistic ideologies. However, he did not present Soka Education as a solution to the conflict or war taking place then. As an educator, his mission was to develop an educational pedagogy which best served the pupil's needs and helped bring out the greatest potential within him or her. His philosophy that the great good and value in one's life comes from "confronting and challenging 'great evil'" (Ikeda, 24), automatically states that fighting for social and environmental justice will enable one to live a life of great value.

In any case, Makiguchi's theory was formed from his direct interactions with the children and his keen observations of the human being rather than the changing, external, social and natural environment. In his view, the happiness of the individual is the basis of a healthy and wealthy society. This is what Ikeda refers to when he calls for "the creation of a society that serves the essential needs of education" (93).

When discussing a society that serves education, not economic pursuit nor militaristic competition, but the cultivation of the human being becomes the purpose and central concern of the society. It is a humanistic society, in which the reverence for life is established at the core of its value system. To realize such an ideal is the challenge of Soka University of America (SUA), which was founded by people who believed in the educational values proposed by Makiguchi and his successors. As stated in its motto, "Be Philosophers of a Renaissance of Life," the mission of SUA is not only to restore humanism in society, but to restore the essential dignity of life in all our endeavors.

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# Developing Sustainability

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Soka Education: Leadership for Sustainable Development

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## Introduction

Before delving into issues of sustainable development, it is useful to stop and define the terms more clearly. Sustainability has been defined in a number of ways including "living on the interest rather than the principal"; "always thinking of the seventh generation"; and "living in such a way that we as well as our grandchildren can enjoy the same quality of life" (McKeown et al. 9-10).

"Development," on the other hand, has become such a common word that we seldom bother to ask ourselves what it means. Dictionary definitions of "development" include: Evolution into a more complex state; addition of intricate details; bringing into fruition etc. Interestingly, none of these definitions can exist without something being developed—the verb has no meaning without an accompanying object. Further, you can develop a rash, a film, or a bad habit, but you would be rather hard pressed to *develop* a nation. Today, however, we use this word by itself: "Development" has become a sacrosanct ideal towards which we are all aspiring—rushing. So, what are we talking about developing?

This paper focuses on the development of sustainability itself. Drawing upon Native American wisdom, the Buddhist view of the interconnectedness of life, the Gaia hypothesis, the Deep Ecology movement and Gandhian philosophy, I argue that unsustainable technologies and lifestyles are a symptom rather than a cause; the cause is an unsustainable worldview. Sustainable development, therefore, needs to go beyond economic or socio-political development; it must include a sustainable (and sustained) philosophical and intellectual development that encourages sustainability. This paper also includes examples of technologies and lifestyle patterns brought about by such a philosophical transformation, as well as suggestions for implementing sustainability education at Soka University of America (SUA).

It is generally agreed that sustainable development has three main pillars: Economy, society, and the environment. Although the three are equally important and interconnected, this paper focuses primarily on the environmental aspect. This is because, so far, SUA seems to have ignored the fourth of its founding principles—"Foster leaders of creative coexistence between nature and humanity." I am yet to encounter a serious attempt to understand or implement this principle in the General Education curriculum of the

university. I believe that, by addressing this crucial fourth pillar of our education, SUA can and must become a role model and leader of the new sustainable development models that are fast catching the attention of the scholarly community as well as the general public.

<u>A fundamental philosophical change</u>

In the radio program "Deep ecology for the twenty-first century," Arne Naess proposed that the current ecological crisis stems primarily from an incorrect philosophy of life; it is "basically a crisis of our philosophy and values, which lead to the kind of society we have made and the kind of lives we lead. So, if we are going to do something significant about this crisis, and the problem is our values and philosophy, then clearly the answer lies in finding a new philosophy." Today, sustainability demands that we go far beyond tokenism: It helps to plant trees and recycle paper, but this is not enough to preserve our planet. Our consumption patterns need to change, and for this to happen, our worldviews and life philosophies need to undergo a fundamental transformation.

What, then, is this fundamental philosophical change that our society needs so badly today? Naess would argue, and many others would concur, that we lack, above all, the ability to appreciate connections—between academic disciplines, between parts of society, and between all life forms. In his speech "Humanity in Education," Soka University founder Daisaku Ikeda emphasized the wisdom to recognize the interconnectedness of all things as the goal of education. He quotes the 19th century Japanese educator Yukichi Fukuzawa: "The informed person who does not know connections among things differs from a dictionary only in that he eats and the dictionary does not" (qtd. in Ikeda 128, Soka Education). Education, Dr. Ikeda argues, is meaningless if it does not help students to perceive the connections between academic disciplines as well as between human beings and amongst all life.

As Dr. Ikeda acknowledges, this idea is hardly new: almost all pre-industrial societies recognized sacred connections that our modern civilization overlooks. Nearly 150 years ago, when the government in Washington sought to buy the Native Americans' lands, a famous chief, Chief Seattle, responded with one of the most eloquent statements on the natural world. He began by asking the government in Washington, "How can you buy the sky? How can you own the rain and wind?" He then went on to recount the ways in which his people were connected, "like brother and sister" to the air, the water, the hills, every flower, every pine needle and every humming insect, in fact to "every part o the earth." Finally, he speaks what have become his most famous words:

All things are connected like the blood that unites us.

We did not weave the web of life.

We are merely a strand in it.

Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat.

If we sell you the land, care for it as we have cared for it.

Hold in your mind the memory of the land, as it is when you receive it.

Preserve the land and the air and the rivers for your

children's children and love it as we have loved it

Unfortunately, we did not heed the Native chief's advice, and the "mother's heartbeat" of which Chief Seattle spoke with so much feeling became little more than a shopping mall full of resources to be exploited.

In the middle of the twentieth century, two scientists sought to reverse the mechanical, profit-oriented view of the earth that our industrial civilization supports. James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis proposed the Gaia hypothesis—the idea of the living earth. As Margulis explains:

Gaia is not, as many claim, a theory of the Earth as a single living organism. Yet the Earth, in the biological sense, has a body sustained by a complex physiology… The sum of planetary life, Gaia, is an emergent property of interaction among organisms, the spherical planet on which they reside, and an energy source, the sun. Furthermore, Gaia is an ancient phenomenon. Trillions of jostling, feeding, mating, exuding beings comprise her planetary system. (Margulis)

Many have argued against Gaia as a scientific theory; a discussion of the scientific credentials of this belief system is outside the scope of this paper. What the Gaia hypothesis does offer, however, is another interesting philosophical framework. Mary C. Bateson argues that the most important contribution of the Gaia worldview is that the natural world becomes alive, not static. Suddenly, Bateson points out, our reality is no longer "mechanical" but "living" (Bateson 14)

Further, the Gaia theory takes us back to Chief Seattle's idea of the interconnected earth. If all life is indeed interconnected, if we cannot destroy one organism without affecting an entire ecosystem, this would force us to rethink our own place in the world. Cockroaches, for instance, have been shown to be crucial players in ecosystems: They are the decomposers that return nutrients to the soil. Some species of ants have been shown to help in soil respiration, and earthworms are commonly acknowledged as farmers' best friends for their role in aerating the soil and distributing nutrients. Although we may not know the role each organism plays in our lives, if we were to get rid of all these "pests," we would probably find it rather hard to survive ourselves. Once we understand the full implications of this fact, the natural world becomes "a sacred process in which we share, a community to participate in, not an object to be used" (Bateson 15). As respectful participants in this community of life, we are much more likely to ensure our own survival as well as that of all the species populating our planet.

The Deep Ecology movement rests on a similar hypothesis. Its main tenet is that all life has intrinsic value i.e. value independent of its usefulness to human beings. For instance, Deep Ecologists vehemently

disagree with the idea that trees are a renewable resource; they would rather regard the natural world as a community along which we evolved than a resource: The moment we view nature as a *resource*, we distance ourselves from it. Besides, although trees do eventually grow back, the trees we cut down are decades, even centuries, old; we can grow back the forest we have cut down, but not in our lifetimes. Further, the destruction of a particular tree or animal often destroys, or at least harms, an entire ecosystem. Deep Ecology bases itself on the interconnectedness of life and cannot accept the destruction of one species to satisfy the whims of another.

Unlike many environmental movements, Deep Ecology does not merely treat humans as invaders on the planet. Rather, it recognizes that humans evolved on this planet just like all other species and have as much—but not more—of a right to exist. Making humans the "bad guys" is a crucial mistake that many environmentalists make; the moment they do this, they further the "I-it" relationship with nature that Deep Ecologists believe to be the fundamental cause of so many of our problems. Therefore, Deep Ecology argues that human beings are and need to remain a part of the natural community for their own sake.

For example, Edward O. Wilson's "Biophilia" hypothesis suggests that humans need the natural world in order to maintain their own sanity. In "Deep Ecology for the twenty-first century", Wilson points to experiments that have shown that patients recover faster if their hospital room faces a patch of wilderness rather than a blank wall, or if their pets are allowed to visit them. More generally, he points out that even in big cities, the highest property prices are ocean-views and park-facing apartments—what he sees as an indication of humans' instinctive need to be amongst nature.

## The Spirit of Mahatma Gandhi

At SUA, we have named one of our academic buildings after Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, but he is consistently absent from the university curriculum. Although Gandhi is best known for his role in securing India's independence, he was much more than a political activist. He was also a great philosopher and many of his ideas can be seen as the forerunners to the sustainable development movement.

Gandhi sought Sarvodhya—a win-win situation for all—and the path he outlined towards this end was Anthyodhya—attention to the poorest. All of Gandhi's movements sought to embrace and empower the poor. For example, the famous Dandi march culminated in the breaking of the salt law, which imposed high taxes on salt and disallowed the Indian populace from making their own salt. This issue affected the common Indian, and by regaining the right to make salt, the Indian people regained a fundamental part of their sense of independence and self-worth. Gandhi's successes always rested on his ability to involve the masses.

Similarly, Gandhi's view of production always took into account the needs of the poorest, and his economic proposals have today become the basis for many sustainable development models. Gandhi insisted that "mass production" ought to be replaced by "production by the masses." M.S. Swaminathan, one of the fathers if India's agricultural revolution, concurs that a truly sustainable economy must look not only at the consumer but also at the producer. If the producer is poor and uneducated, he or she is less likely to sacrifice higher production in the short-term for longer-term benefits associated with sustainability. Mass production, and the mechanization of labor it demands, also increases unemployment and poverty, thereby furthering the vicious cycle. On the other hand, production by the masses, as embodied in the cottage industries Gandhi helped establish, gives employment and job satisfaction to many more people. As weavers, as craftspeople, as farmers, the masses are thus gradually given an economic base to depend upon, and the foundation for a society free of want is in place.

Gandhi's notion of local self-sufficiency relates even more directly to the goal of sustainable development. Gandhi argued that each village ought to be able to meet its basic needs from surrounding areas and using locally available resources. Once these basic needs have been met, surplus may be traded. Gandhi did not believe in economies of scale, which externalized the important costs borne by the environment and by the poor.

The present global economy is the furthest possible cry from this notion: Today, our cheese comes from one part or the world, our apples from another, and our cauliflowers from a third. In the process, huge amounts of fuel, energy, and money are wasted in packaging, refrigeration, transportation etc. In *Stuff—the Secret Lives of Everyday Things*, Ryan and Durning present a shocking analysis of the amount of resources that go into the simple American meal of hamburger, fries and a cola. The "secret life" of the cola reflects a much larger problem:

The cola came from a Seattle processing plant. It is made of 90 percent water from the Cedar River. The high-fructose corn syrup came from Iowa, as did the carbon dioxide used to produce the fizz, which is produced by fermenting corn. The caffeine came from a processing plant that makes decaffeinated coffee. The cola can was made from one-third recycled aluminum and two-thirds bauxite ore strip-mined in Australia. It came to Washington state on a Korean freighter, and was processed into aluminum using an amount of energy equivalent to a quart of gasoline. The energy came from some of the dams that have contributed to a 97 percent decrease in the salmon runs of the Columbia Basin. (Ryan and Durning)

Further, they point out that this typical American meal travels 1,200 miles to reach our plates; one can only imagine the amount of fuel, storage spaces, refrigeration etc. this involves. How much easier and more sustainable it would be, if only we could learn to eat at least our everyday meals from our local neighborhoods.

Nor is this vision of local self-sufficiency merely one man's idle dream. Many development models around the world are recognizing the importance of Gandhi's vision and using it to empower communities,

one example being Swaminathan's Bio-villages. Believing that "jobless growth [of the economy] is joyless growth" (Swaminathan), Swaminathan's team set to work creating sustainable villages in Pondicherry in South India. In a program aimed at reaching 375,000 people by 2007, Swaminathan's team first introduced "eco-farming, meaning that chemicals and capital--the building blocks of modern farming--are replaced with knowledge and biological inputs like vermiculture [exploitation of earthworms], bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides" (Swaminathan). Apart from benefiting the environment, this method helped create more sustainable jobs within the villages.

Swaminathan's team then analyzed a family's resources to determine what would be the most effective use of the resources they already possessed. For example:

landless laboring families take to household mushroom cultivation, ornamental fish-rearing, coir rope-making, rearing small ruminant animals under stall-fed conditions and other enterprises which are within their means. Those with a small plot of land can take to hybrid seed production, floriculture, dairying, poultry and other high value enterprises. Groups of assetless women engage in aquaculture in community ponds (Swaminathan).

In this manner, the per capita income of the villagers went up by $23 a month—a huge sum in an Indian village. Based upon Gandhi's dream of local self-sufficiency and partnership with the poor, Swaminathan's team was able to use local resources to raise economic standards and simultaneously cultivate greater environmental awareness. Now, under UNESCO's Asian Ecotechnology Network, the biovillage model is spreading to other parts of India and to other nations.

Sustainability education at SUA

The United Nations has declared 2005-2015 the Decade of Education for Sustainability, clearly recognizing the crucial role of educational institutions as the place where students' intellects and life philosophies are nurtured. However, as McKeown et al. point out, the relationship between education and sustainable development is rather complex. On one hand, basic education improves a nation's chances of achieving sustainability. For example, women's education has been shown to reduce birth rates, education of farmers helps reduce waste, minimize damage to the environment and improve production, On the other hand, statistics reveal that countries with the highest rates of higher education are often the most unsustainable. For example, in the United States, "more than 80 percent of the population has some post-secondary education, and about 25 percent of the population has a four-year university degree. [But] per-capita energy use and waste generation in the United States are nearly the highest in the world" (McKeown et al. 11). Clearly, then, while basic literacy aids in sustainable development, higher education does not

necessarily lead to more sustainability. A new paradigm in education, which reorients education towards sustainability, is therefore urgently needed.

For Soka University of America, a university that has taken on the formidable task of developing global citizens committed to contributing to world peace, sustainability education should be a natural next step along the same path. After all, sustainable development is little more than the realization of a just and equitable world, of a human community that treasures all life and works to preserve it. In fact, world citizenship is necessary for sustainable development. Environmental problems cross international boundaries—no nation alone can solve the world's environmental problems, just as no nation can solve only its *own* environmental problems. The task requires a global solidarity, which in turn requires an ethic of care for the whole planet and all its people. In this community of aspiring "global citizens," education for sustainability should be easier than it is anywhere else.

I believe that the first step towards implementing sustainability education at SUA is to burst the bubble of affluence and material comfort that isolates us from most of the world's people. Living in one of the richest neighborhoods in the world, it is easy to ignore poverty, ecological damage, disease and malnutrition. I would like us to start our university education with a keen awareness of the world outside our bubble—outside the world of laptops, comfortable beds, and enough food for us to waste. People-centered academia requires an understanding of people and the lives they live. No student should be able to graduate from SUA without knowing how many people will never be able to enjoy what he or she does.

Further, understanding these issues in their real contexts is crucial. For example, blaming unsustainable lifestyles on the developing countries of the world—the "illiterate, overpopulated countries"—falls right into the trap of prejudice that clouds any real understanding of the issues at hand. It may be true that Bangladesh's population is burgeoning and needs to be controlled, but it is equally true that the average Bangladeshi consumes about $1/30^{th}$ of the resources consumed by the average American. From this perspective, America may be the country most in need of controlling its population; we cannot keep laying the blame elsewhere.

The third important factor is raising awareness was summed up in "Deep Ecology for the $21^{st}$ century" by Kirkpatrick Sail: "When you say 'No' to something, you have to have something else to say 'Yes' to." Awareness simply of problems is overwhelming; awareness of solutions is crucial to sustainability education. I would like to see some of the aforementioned theories, as well as new economic models like biovillages, incorporated into the university curriculum. This would expose students to alternative frameworks within which to view our reality and empower generations of world citizens with the realization that they do have a choice.

All the same, information alone will not necessarily sensitize students or further the cause of sustainability; it could even further alienate students from a reality that is so clearly not their own. For this reason, I believe that Core should be at least partly an introspective course. Students should be made to look

within and evaluate the connections between their own lives and the environmental realities we live with. Many exercises have been developed to help students put their lives in perspective and understand how much of an impact they have on the world.

One such activity, which takes only a few minutes, is the measurement of ecological footprints, i.e. "a calculation that estimates the area of Earth's productive land and water required to supply the resources that an individual or group demands, as well as to absorb the wastes that the individual or group produces" (PBS website). The earth currently has about 4.5 biologically productive acres per person, but the average American footprint is 24 acres, i.e. if everyone lived at the same standard as the average American, we would need more than five planets to sustain the earth's current population (Earth Day Footprint Quiz).

This fact, shocking as it is, hits home much harder when students measure their *personal* ecological footprints and realize exactly how much they are overdrawing on the earth's resources. Further, because the test measures specific lifestyle attributes such as food, housing, transportation and shows students the areas in which they are overshooting the earth's carrying capacity, it is easier for them to know how to check their unsustainable lifestyles. When students at a university in South Carolina were asked to take this test, many were surprised to find just how unsustainable their own lives were. The researchers who conducted this study report, "Over 15% of the students reduced their overall footprint by at least 10 acres over the course of the semester. Students decreased their total acre scores by a mean of over 4.21 acres. On average, each student decreased his or her footprint nearly the equivalent of the number of acres available, on a global basis, to sustain one additional individual" (Haque). This experiment was a clear victory for sustainability education.

Finally, in order to truly appreciate life, one has to go out and experience it. Perhaps the easiest way to do this would be to follow the example of Cagayan College in the Philippines, hailed by SUA founder Daisaku Ikeda as a center of "true education" because of its graduation requirement that each student plant and nurture five trees (qtd. in SGI Newsletter). As Dr. Ikeda noted, such a graduation requirement gives students a personal connection with the environment, thereby binding them to it in ways that books alone cannot. In my own experience, almost all the students of my Spring 2004 Learning Cluster in Sustainable Development agreed that the experience of planting and raising an organic garden connected us to the land in a completely new way, apart from teaching us valuable lessons in responsibility and stewardship. Composting is another easy to implement project that forces students to get dirty, to get involved with the natural world and to experience the beauty, the wonder and the fragility of life firsthand.

At SUA, we also have a great, but sadly under-utilized, educational resource—the Aliso and Wood Canyon, with its incredible variety of plant and animal species. I remember taking a trip to a hillside teeming with native plants for the aforementioned Learning Cluster. At one point, our guide pointed out a dead tree and informed us that they did not cut it down because a certain species of salamander can only survive on dead trees, and cutting down this tree would therefore mean destroying its habitat. What more powerful

lesson could there be about the wisdom of nature, where there is no waste? We are literally surrounded by hundreds of such valuable lessons in sustainability and environmental education, if only we were to venture into the Canyon and discover them.

## Acting Locally

Finally, theory must be followed by real changes in our own lives. We cannot expect the world to take a more sustainable turn while ignoring our own consumption patterns. We cannot protest that the war in Iraq is all about oil but insist on driving our cars to the gym. Idealism, although essential, will amount to nothing if we are afraid to back it up with real-world action. We cannot think it is okay to make an exception for ourselves, as individuals or as an institution. "Green Schools" that integrate an eco-friendly design into the curriculum (for example, using alternative energy strategies such as photovoltaic cells to teach students how electricity is generated) are fast emerging as an alternative design that benefits individual students as well as the environment (Zimmerman). These are, of course, long-term measures with a number of consequences, but they represent one possible path for us to consider in our journey towards greater sustainability.

At the start of 2006, university founder Dr. Ikeda sent a clear injunction to global citizens. He writes of the founder of Soka education: "Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was a firm proponent of a global outlook rooted in the local community. The place where we are right now is the arena for our activities as global citizens" (Ikeda, New Year's Message). This idea ties in perfectly with the age-old motto of environmental movements: "Think globally; act locally."

SUA is uniquely placed for local learning and local action: The problem is literally at our doorstep. In February 2005, local NGOs won a long drawn case to protect the Aliso Canyon from being turned into a golf course ("Save Aliso Canyon"). Although Montage Resorts—the company in question—has temporarily shelved its plans, the alliance of NGOs that have been fighting for this are cautious in their optimism, waiting to see what Montage's next step is. As a part of the Aliso Viejo community, we should be asking ourselves if we are willing to watch the destruction of this beautiful wilderness reserve; however, we remain almost entirely unaware of the problem's sheer existence. We go to class, isolated from our local realities, yet convinced we can make a global difference. One of our professors once asked me, "If you can't reach out to the community beyond the school gate, how will you ever reach out to the whole world?" He has a point.

I am not trying to suggest that everyone must become an environmental activist but merely that SUA, above all universities, must nurture informed and concerned individuals who are thinking about global issues. Indeed, we can no longer live under the delusion that a handful of activists *can* preserve our planet. As Goldman argues:

An informed and engaged populace is critical to any broad change and citizens who possess broader awareness and understanding of the challenges facing the world regarding natural resources and economic

development are essential to the promotion of sustainability. The world must be populated by thoughtful consumers, producers, and policymakers who will begin their awareness in the classroom. (16)

As global citizens, we have certain responsibilities towards the globe, and we also demand certain rights from it. Often the two go together—if we are going to demand a world in which we as well as our grandchildren can lead comfortable lives, we have to be willing to fulfill our responsibilities. As informed and concerned citizens, we can make choices about the kind of world we want to build and leave behind for the generations that follow. Without sustainability education, SUA's goal of fostering global citizens will therefore remain sadly incomplete.

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# Soka Education and Sustainable Society: Creative Understanding, Value Creation, and Their Effect on Social Change

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Introduction

This paper uses Daisaku Ikeda's interpretation of Makiguchi's Soka pedagogy as a philosophical basis to examine the problem of social unsustainability. Enrich Fromm's book *Escape from Freedom* is used to articulate factors which limit positive change within modern society. In addition, educational philosopher John Dewey's book *Experience and Education* is utilized to analyze the shortcomings in education which limit free-thought in children. Finally, humanistic education is examined as a means of proctoring individuals who are capable of free-thought, creativity, and can contribute to a culture which is sustainable rather than destructive. This paper does not suggest any set of particular reforms for educational institutions. Rather, the intention here is to articulate how the progressive ideas underlying humanistic education can help point society in a direction which is more sustainable.

On a fundamental level this world is suffering. A sustainable future is, at the moment, only a dream held by a precious few. Most people don't realize how immensely destructive the human race is to the environment. Currently, the number of animal species "red listed" for possible extinction sits at 9500. While the number of "blue listed" species (those which are recovering) sits at only 317 (Primack 169). The number of extinct and endangered species will only rise as an ever-growing human population increases its pressure on available habitat and resources.  This so-called "sixth extinction" threatens to destroy entire ecosystems which are vital to human life (Wilson 54). In addition, the effects of global warming are beginning to be felt around the world, if nothing is done to decrease the current rate of greenhouse gas emission, it is expected that the mean global temperature will increase by an estimated 1.4 to 5.8°C in the next century (Primack 96). In addition to mass de-speciation and an increase in global temperature, the human population is also expected to rise as high as 10.7 billion persons by 2050 (Wilson 31). Figures such as these are terrifying from an ecological standpoint; they foretell a future of Earth robbed of her biological heritage. Therefore, I believe the most important question facing humanity is: What are the driving factors behind our unsustainable society, and how can they be rectified in order to build a sustainable future? For the purposes of this paper, sustainability is defined as: a time when the base human needs of food, shelter, and safety are met; while at

the same time humanity consumes fewer resources than the Earth can produce in a given year. The following attempts to point out the tendencies of destruction and greed ingrained in modern human society which contribute to unsustainability, and how the philosophies underlying the Soka educational system may be applied to alleviating them.

Ikeda argues in his collection of essays called *Soka Education* that the health of the biosphere is directly linked to the happiness of individuals living within society (76). Given that this is the case, in order to understand the driving force behind environmental sickness, it is important to first study the sicknesses of modern society.

In his seminal work *Escape from Freedom*, Erich Fromm illustrates that social ills are directly linked to the tendency for modern democratic societies to suffer from a condition which he calls "the escape from freedom". Fromm says that, while physical freedoms such as those of movement, speech, property and the like are not curtailed, the mental freedom to be a free-thinking individual is. Thus, people mistake intellectual imprisonment as true freedom simply because the fetters of enslavement are not physically felt. Fromm says that: "The right to express thoughts means something only if we are able to have thoughts of our own" (240). He sights cultural factors, such as the glorification of materialistic economic gain and a reductive educational system, as contributing to a "negative freedom" within democratic societies (241). Negative freedom is a tendency for individuals to validate their lives by fulfilling the expectations of society, rather than validating life with creative and self-driven actions (Fromm 253).

Fromm argues that negative freedom results because, from a young age, humans are instructed to disrespect and discard their own understanding, feelings, and sensitivity, in favor of given information. He states: "From the very start of education original thinking is discouraged and ready-made ideas are put into people's heads" (246). In addition, genuine and spontaneous emotional reactions are discouraged, this further decreases an individual's ability to formulate and express genuine emotional experience. Fromm highlights this point when he says, "There can be no doubt that any creative thinking—as well as any other creative activity—is insatiably linked with emotion…yet to be 'emotional' has become synonymous with being unsound or unbalanced" (244). On top of the discouragement of natural creations such as emotions, Fromm also points out that education systems often emphasize memorization and reductions, over synthesis. Instead of teaching children how to think independently, they are taught only to understand enough to pass a test or get an acceptable grade. Fromm states: "The pathetic superstition prevails that by knowing more and more facts one arrives at knowledge of reality. Hundreds of scattered and unrelated facts are dumped into the heads of students…so that there is little time left for thinking" (247). In this environment, Fromm argues, education becomes something that is undertaken for the sake of someone else. Rather than learning for the sake of

deepening one's own understanding and self-expression, Children attend school to meet the educational expectations of others. And, without the intellectual tools to weave fragmented ideas into holistic understandings, individuals tend to feel small and isolated (Fromm 253).

If individuals cannot express themselves, feel isolated, and therefore do not respect their own holistic understanding; then there is the tendency to escape from freedom into a world of confusion. Fromm says that, "Giving up spontaneity and individuality results in a thwarting of life" (254). Therefore, society should aim itself toward proctoring "positive freedom" which is the "spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality" (Fromm 257). Insufficient education systems, which emphasize submission to given information above free-thought, have driven modern society toward the violent and unsustainable perils of negative freedom. Without a respect for the self, there can be no respect for the other (Fromm 262). Therefore, I argue that the disrespect for one's own worth as a creative being also prevents individuals for respecting the individual creativity of others. When extrapolated to the large scale: if a society cannot respect itself, then it also cannot respect the biosphere which it inhabits. Hence, I believe, it is because of this subject-object confusion afflicting society that humanity continues to become more and more unsustainable.

Robert Putnam points out in his book *Bowling Alone* that, over the last 50 years, the number of American citizens involved in community life has decreased significantly. And that this trend of isolation has proven detrimental to the American democratic system which "requires an actively engaged citizenry" (254). According to Putnam, it seems that increased technological innovation, population, and information availability have supported negative freedom and decreased genuine human interaction over the last century (283). Fromm's analyses of the educational shortcomings in American society, and the resulting escape from freedom, have been validated by Putnam's research which concludes that: "Sometime around 1965-70 America reversed course and started becoming both less just economically and less well-connected politically. This pair of trends illustrates that fraternity and equality are complimentary, not warring values" (359). Along with decreased civil and social engagement, there has been an equally alarming increase in negative behaviors such as suicide. Putnam states, "Between 1950 and 1995 the suicide rate among adolescents age fifteen to nineteen more than quadrupled, while the rate among young adults aged twenty to twenty-four…nearly tripled" (261). This upward trend in suicide is very disturbing, and though Putnam's study was limited to the United States, his quandary is one which every person on Earth should seriously consider: How has modern society come to such a miserable head?

The Industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th century made it possible for people to became what Fromm calls, "cogs in the machine, well fed, and well clothed, yet not free men but automatons" (xiv). Economic freedom promised to solve society's problems, yet in the end it seems that increased physical freedom has isolated and depressed humanity more than ever. Now unsustainable practices have warmed the Earth, exploded the population, and started a mass extinction. Even though the biosphere has been sacrificed for the

sake of humans, Goodwin points out in his Essay "In the Shadow of Culture" that, "though the current science of quantities has given us the ability to produce enough goods to satisfy the needs of all the planet's inhabitants, it has left us with a rapidly declining quality of life worldwide" (50). Despite our furious consumption and advanced technology, the task of elevating the overall quality of human life in a sustainable way, has become seemingly impossible as time has passed.

More recently, the so-called "cybernetic revolution" (an increase of computer power and human communication) has provided and opportunity to re-connect humanity in order to become a "globalized" society (Fromm xiv). Yet it seems that such tools have only allowed the human race a greater utility to divide, consume, and destroy. Fromm points out that: "Man's brain lives in the Twentieth Century, yet the hearts of most men still live in the stone age" (xvi). This reality means that, in the future, an increase in technology must be matched by an equal increase in humanity's shared responsibility for its actions. In terms of the environment, society must learn to live *within* the system of available resources, not upon it (Wilson 189). Yet this change cannot come about if the current social system does not allow for such change to begin on an individual level.

In response to unsustainability and war Ikeda, founder of the Soka school system, writes: "The root of all these problems is our collective failure to make the human being—human happiness—the constant focus and goal of all fields of endeavor" (99). The future will demand new solutions to old problems. Where industry, technology, and economics have failed, a neo-renaissance of humanistic education must succeed (Ikeda 164). Old systems of educating and thinking, though efficient at acquiring wealth, have proven insufficient for alleviating the root causes of human unhappiness (Fromm 251). The way in which the human species views itself and the Earth must shift. Educational systems have to be turned from serving societies and economies, to proctoring the happiness and unique sensitivity of people (Ikeda 77). In the future, the ability to dialogue within a diverse global community will become imperative. In his essay "Will we become smarter?" Robert Schank expresses that, because the next fifty years will herald in an era of hyper information availability and communication, the ability to ask the right questions, to synthesize innovative solutions, will become far more important than memorization and reduction (209).

The encouragement of individuals who possess such fee thought is the focus of Soka education. In addition, Soka education is a technique of dialogue-based inquiry which is designed to allow for an integration of the self within community (Ikeda 18). The ultimate goal if Soka education is to produce "global citizens", people who transcend nationalistic difference and division, and can produce new and creative solutions to ancient dilemmas (Ikeda 20). The underlying hope of Soka education is to revolutionize the way people fundamentally think about life and living, in order to revolutionize society as a whole (Ikeda 179).

Here, the pedagogical structures of Soka education are the focus of inquiry. However, this is not to say that Soka is the only educational philosophy that will have utility in creating positive change in society. Ikeda, Fromm, and Dewey each express similar trends of education and action which can be utilized to produce positive change. Yet, before any synthesis can be made, we must first be familiarized with a brief history of Soka pedagogy.

"Soka" is a Japanese word represented by the kanji *sozo* and *kachi* and means 'to create value' (Ikeda 3). Founded by Tsunestuburo Makiguchi in the early 20th century, Soka is a system of educational pedagogy which was developed in reaction to the nationalist and militaristic educational doctrines of Japan's Meiji Era (1868-1912) (Ikeda 4). First defined in his book *The Geography of Human Life* (1903), the idea of Soka was centered on community involvement, the happiness of individuals via the expression their own unique humanity, and the interconnectedness of all life (Ikeda 5). Makiguchi extended his theories of value creation as an educational tool with his second work *The System of Value Creating Pedagogy* (1919).

Embracing religion late in life at the age of 54, Makiguchi chose the Nichiren school of Buddhism for its human-centered philosophy (Ikeda 16). With his disciple Josai Toda in 1930 he founded a lay Buddhist organization called the *Soka Kyoiku Gakkai* (value creation education society) as a supplement to the pre-existing Nichiren priesthood (Ikeda 17). Makiguchi and Toda were imprisoned in 1943 for defying the strict nationalistic edicts of Japan's totalitarian military government. Due to old age and a brutal prison experience, Makiguchi died on November 18, 1944 (Ideda 25). Toda was released at the end of the war and went on to found (along with his disciple Daisaku Ikeda) the *Soka Gakkai* (Value creation society). In the intervening decades since, Ikeda has become a respected scholar for peace and founded a Soka school system in Japan which has spread throughout the world.

To better understand the vision of world peace shared by these educators, one must first understand the basics of Soka philosophy. Ikeda defines value creation as: "A measure of the subjective impact that a thing or event has on our lives. While truth identifies an object's essential qualities or properties, value may be considered the measure of the relevance or effect an object or event bears on the individual" (16). In other words, when attempting to understand what value creation means, it is important to understand that value is defined without absolutes. Within this system, no act or object can be defined as necessarily good or evil. All actions contain the potentiality for creating both value and anti-value. Given this, the underlying philosophy of Soka is that every word and action can and will manifest either positively or negatively within one's own life and the lives of others. Therefore, by practicing value creation philosophy, one is attempting to formulate positive patterns of thought and evaluation which will allow for one to manifest a greater amount of that which is positive, rather than negative (Ikeda 17). This process of value creation is continuous and takes place within every sphere of life. Soka philosophy emphasizes "manifesting one's innate human dignity amidst the challenges of everyday life" (Ikeda 17). This goal is the answer to Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* where he

defines the solution to negative freedom to be the spontaneous and personal actualization of individual sensitivity for the sake of the self. For Fromm, "there is only one meaning in life: the act of living life itself" (261).

However, the creation of value is not easy; it takes concerted effort to be positive in a world filled with strife. Ikeda states: "Enmity, contradiction and discord are unavoidable aspects of relations among humans and our relationships with nature and the universe. Yet, by persevering in spite of these conflicts…we can forge and polish our individuality and character" (74). Soka is not about removing conflict from life, but rather utilizing conflict in a positive way to grow and develop as a person. Each new problem is yet another opportunity to think, re-evaluate, modify, and create an innovative solution. Solving problems with violence is simple, but reacting with positivism is much more complex and requires intellectual discipline. Soka education is a means by which this intellectual discipline can be developed. I believe that creating value within everyday life, with everyday actions, is the key to understanding and addressing the dilemmas of modern human culture. Ikeda states: "People do not develop in isolation from their environment, and human affairs are just a reflection of the people" (75). Soka Pedagogy is rooted in the community, by creating value from the day to day actions of billions of people, entire societies can change. Therefore, education should "instill a sense of belonging and commitment to the community, the nation, and to the world. Ultimately…the welfare of the world is innately linked with, and necessary to, individual well-being" (Ikeda 5). The idea of grassroots engagement for the betterment of all society is what Putnam's book points out to be the glue that holds democratic society together.

To create anything worth while, we as beings require the help and input of others. Educational philosopher John Dewey points this out when he says: "It is not the will or desire of any one person which establishes order, but the moving spirit of the whole group. The control is social, but individuals are parts of community, not outside of it" (54). Violence occurs when the differences between individuals become divisive. And an indifferent acceptance of violence in society, whether blatant or passive, is the manifestation of people's disrespect for themselves (Ikeda 62). Soka Education is designed to allow individuals to draw their own conjectures from experience and interaction with others. This process of evaluation and interconnection builds wisdom, and then wisdom can be utilized to take conscious action in life (Ikeda 20). However, this type of group action is a far cry from conformity or group thinking. On the contrary, Makiguchi developed Soka education as an answer to the growing fascism in pre-war Meiji Japan. Soka education agrees with Fromm when he states: "Men are born equal but they are also born different" (262). Thus, individual contribution, not submission, is the driving force behind social development.

Human beings are born without any understanding of the world. Only through education can young humans learn to express their unique individuality (Ikeda 99). Therefore, if we wish to create a sustainable and humanistic society, we must first re-evaluate and modify our method of educating young human beings. The goal of which, Ikeda says, should be to produce people: "Who possess the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living; the courage not to fear or deny difference... and the Compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's own immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places" (21). Children are a microcosm of adult society, and have grown to reflect the ailing health of adult society (Ikeda 65). As Putnam pointed out, children today are growing ever more depressed, violent, and isolated. Events like the Columbine High School shooting in the United States are becoming a global phenomenon. To alleviate such horror in the future, the whole culture of humanity must turn its attention to cultivating capable and non-violent youth (Ikeda 66).

I believe that in the future, as the number of people on earth increases to an estimated 11 billion by the year 2050, the nature of competition will have to fundamentally change (Wilson 31). Rather than vying for economic, political, and military dominance, the human race will have to embrace humanism and creativity as the driving force for human life. In the stead of blind materialism, human action and sensibility must be powered by the desire to express one's own innate understanding of the world. This was Makiguchi's dream: "He foresaw an age in which the power of character and the humane qualities of individuals and whole societies—manifested in the creative forces of their cultural achievements—would be a greater force than military prowess, political or economic domination" (Ikeda 7). To create a sustainable human society we must first learn to recognize and support those actions which create value, while at the same time finding ways of phasing out activities which are destructive to the environment and human life.

Fromm defines democracy as "a system that creates the economic, political, and cultural conditions for the full development of the individual" (272). Yet if this is not the case, and democracy is filled with people who feel disconnected from one another, then true democracy no longer exists as such. Therefore, Fromm says that: "Fascism is a system that, regardless under which name, makes the individual subordinate to extraneous purposes and weakens the development of the individual" (272). I argue that the idea of democracy cannot be built upon physical freedom alone, and must support positive freedom as defined by Fromm. The analysis presented here suggests that, because our society generally proctors negative freedom, it resembles a type of Fascism. In an almost prophetic vision of humanity's future mental enslavement, Immanuel Kant suggests in his essay "What is Enlightenment" that it is only by embracing and respecting individuals that a society can become truly peaceful. Thus, to change the world from an irrationally destructive place where negative freedom threatens to enslave potentially exemplary democratic societies, to a place of creation and individual self respect, Kant says that: "Free thought acts upon the minds of the people and they eventually become capable of acting in freedom. Eventually the government is also influenced by

this free thought and thereby it treats man, who is now more than a machine, in a manor according to his dignity" (141). This statement supports Fromm and Ikeda's idea that societal change will only come about if individuals allow themselves to express their own personal human understandings.

John Dewey spent a lifetime fighting on the front line of progressive educational systems in the United States. In his concise work *Experience and Education* he articulates the shortcomings of traditional education, and some suggestions as to how it may be improved. Dewey highlights in his book how education has been traditionally seen as merely a way of preparing youth to participate in society (18). In school children are expected to learn skills and knowledge that will allow them to survive in an individualistic "dog eat dog" world (Dewey 18). Thus education has become disconnected from the greater whole of human change and reduced to the "acquisition of what already is incorporated in books and the heads of elders" (Dewey 19). Learning in this way is reductive, subordinate, and Sophistic. Dewey's solution to traditional education is to create an educational environment where students are trained to learn based on the act of living life, *experience*, rather than memorization (77). Here, self-evaluation is the means by which knowledge becomes wisdom. In his words: "The difference between civilization and savagery…is found in the degree to which previous experiences have changed the objective conditions under which subsequent experiences take place" (39). Thus, for Dewey, education was not a goal that could be achieved, but a constantly evolving process of evaluation and change. Dewey sums this up when he says: "Intellectual organization is not an end in itself but is the means by which social relations, distinctively human ties and bonds, may be understood and more intelligently ordered" (83). Therefore, learning how to intelligently order information into creative and individual thoughts should be the focus of education.

Fromm and Ikeda each established that Creativity is that which liberates us from self-imposed slavery; it is for this reason that creativity is the core of Soka education. Dewy, Fromm, and Ikeda have all pointed out that "Knowledge can be obtained from without, but creativity and imagination must be activated from within" (Ikeda 131). The creation of new ideas and relationships is how we as human beings express what is truly ours. By creating new ideas in a community of positive-thinking and connected people, any challenge can be overcome. It is our responsibility to be tenaciously creative individuals because, as Ikeda points out, "creativity…is the badge, or proof, of our humanity. Human beings are the only creatures capable of striving positively and dynamically, day after day, to create newer and higher values" (130). Therefore, it is also our responsibility as humans to constantly manifest creativity in our actions. Yet, to unlock this creativity, human beings must be empowered to think for themselves. Thus, the focus of practical Soka Education is to give people the intellectual tools they need to evaluate given information, and then use it in a way that transcends the accumulation of knowledge. In essence, it teaches how to think independently, but goes one step beyond

simple "critical thinking". Here critical thought is focused toward a *conscious* goal: the creation of value (Ikeda 17).

The most central part of Soka Education is the idea of heart to heart dialogue. This is because it is difficult to do anything without the ability to truly understand and interact with other people (Ikeda 42). When the self comes in contact with the other, there is a time when difference can manifest as division. Violence occurs when two parties cannot transcend, learn from, and embrace difference (Ikeda 42). A person cannot walk if one keeps all of his or her weight on a single leg, it takes a shift of bodyweight to be able to pick up the leg and move it forward. The same idea applies to dialogue: if one is blinded by what one thinks to be true, then one will never be able to shift his or her ego out of the way long enough to connect and learn from another person's experience. To illustrate this point, Ikeda states: "Reality can only be revealed through genuine dialogue, where 'self' and 'other' transcend the narrow limits of ego and interact" (43). Education must instill the humbleness necessary to allow the opinions of others to be respected, learned from, and incorporated into one's personal experience. As time marches on, and the snow-blind of the virtual world further circumscribes human interaction, in-person heart to heart dialogue will become immensely important (Ikeda 53). And because Ikeda says "student's lives are not changed by lectures but by people," equal dialogue is the foundation of Soka in-class interaction (106).

To solve the problems of the 21ˢᵗ century, humanity will have to utilize a system of humanistic education which trains people to live with what Ikeda calls "Creative coexistence" (75). This is the ability to see, respect, and learn from the bonds and interactions between people and nature. By interacting with others, to express and evaluate the self, contradiction and discord become the fuel for value creation and constant change. Nothing in life is static, and no resource is infinite, except for the strength of the human soul (Ikeda 75). Therefore, it is the responsibility of humanity to be caretakers of the Earth, not conquerors.

<u>Conclusion</u>

As we have seen, ecological unsustainability is the symptom of an unsustainable culture. Isolation and disrespect for the individual's creative understanding have blinded people to their connection with nature and each other. This "breakdown of communication with nature not only causes humans physical damage but also results in the destruction of virtues such as compassion that are essential to the development of personality" (Ikeda 76). To alleviate the great suffering of this world it will take a grass roots groundswell of individual action. Young people, educated to think independently in a holistic manner, must unite to end divisive violence and greed. The leaders of the 21ˢᵗ century need to stand up and lead a neo-renaissance of humanism and creativity. Human cultures need to transcend difference and institute a global culture where *society* is focused to *serve education*, not the other way around. This eventuality must not remain a seemingly

utopian dream, there is a mere fifty years before the effects of over-population and over-consumption dangerously degrade Earth. Currently the mission of the individual is lost and unclear. Society keeps pushing us to escape from freedom into ideas that are not our own. I believe that education is the means by which individuals can liberate themselves from intellectual tyranny as Ikeda states: "Education is not just a mere right or obligation. I believe education in the broadest sense is the mission of every individual" (95). Thus education, and the creation of value, become one in the same, each aimed at bettering the self by interacting with the other, to improve the whole.

Humanism was the light that ended the dark ages in Europe. Once again it must be humanity's tool to end its second dark age, the current age. Blind idealism is useless without tangible intellectual tools to realize real change. Soka education is a process of forging tools of creativity, not destruction; tools of dialogue, understanding, synthesis, self-responsibility, morality, and daily action. Each must be strengthened over time, by overcoming many struggles, to create supreme value in all endeavors. The motto of a new human enlightenment must be the same as the one which Kant expounded in 1784: "Have courage to use your own intelligence!" (135). I agree with Kant, two hundred and twenty years later, that courage will be the most important force for change in the coming century. I have a great sense of hope for humanity's future, humanism will overcome mental Fascism and apathy because, as Kant asked himself all those year ago: "Do we live at present in an enlightened age? The answer is: No, but in an age of enlightenment" (140). Despite all the negativity in the world today, the seeds of a neo-renaissance have been planted in the hearts of millions around the world. Many are angry at the injustice and apathy of human society. Therefore, uniting the many isolated voices toward a revolution of humanity is not impossible. The youth of the world must lead the way toward a more hopeful future, one built on a supreme respect for the individual creativity of human beings.

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# Imaginative Empathy in Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy of Soka Education

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An Introductory Note

In his March 23, 2005, message to the students of the class of 2005, SUA Founder Daisaku Ikeda said:

"I have received reports in great detail as to what the first class has gone through

over the past four years.  I have also kept all of your letters by my side.  You have

built the great tradition of SUA and I convey my deepest appreciation to you.

…[I]t is my sincere hope that in sharing the same determination and conviction as

myself, you, as young founders, will master up the strength to build a new history of

Soka Education for the future generations to come." [i]

This is the passage that inspired the preamble of the SSU Constitution. Every time I read it I cannot help but cry.  Another passage that triggers a similar reaction in me is found in Ikeda's commemorative address for SUA's first commencement ceremony:

"When I asked President Roselle [of University of Delaware] what he thought Dr.

[Fracis] Alison [founder of the university] had left to the University of Delaware, his

response was clear: Dr. Alison's greatest legacy was the students of the first

graduating class.

I share his feelings completely.  You, the graduates who now take limitless flight into

the vast skies of the future, are my greatest legacy to humankind, humanity's greatest

treasure." [ii]

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[i] Daisaku Ikeda, "On Invitation to the 1st Commencement Ceremony." *For the Leaders of the 21st Century.* (Aliso Viejo: Soka Student Government Association, 2005). 77.
[ii] Daisaku Ikeda, "The University of the 21st Century—Cradle of World Citizens" (Unpublished)

As a young person still, my future is uncertain in many ways. In my darkest hours I often let my mind succumb to feelings of inadequacy as an aspiring intellectual and human being. But then these passages come to my mind and I am reminded of the fact that *I was there*; I was part of the founding generations of Soka University of America. The fact of the wonderful fortune of partaking in this community vastly overwhelms any prospects of failure. It is now my greatest source of self-encouragement.

I also think of these historic foundational years of Soka when Professor David Hansen, who some of you met in this campus, speaks romantically about the years when John Dewey taught at Teachers College. In his narrative he struggles to describe the intellectual atmosphere from which William Heard Kilpatrick, Jonas Soltis, Maxine Greene and other influential thinkers emerged and how they "shaped the historical course of philosophy of education in America."[iii] Not a single day goes by in which I do not ponder about what will come from this intellectual community that we are creating in the sunny hills of Aliso Viejo.

It is from these thoughts and feelings that the question of the educational role of the community was born in me. This is not the question of community in the sociological or anthropological senses. I am interested in the *meaning* of being part of a community and the reason of the tremendous impact that having shared four years of my life with these people has had on my moral self.

It is also important to note that in my personal experience of Soka, the Founder Daisaku Ikeda is included in the community as one model of ethical behavior and inspiration for ethical action (roles that are obviously not exclusive of Ikeda, but that the community as a whole also assume). In fact, as you can tell from the selection of quotes I included in this brief introduction, my view of the Soka community is shaped by the unquestionably powerful influence of the figure of Daisaku Ikeda as a model and inspiration amongst the students of the class of 2005.

Finally, I want to clarify that the question of the community was not openly formulated and did not conspicuously guide the inquiry here. It merely represents the emotional background of my inquiry. This paper deals with the question of the meaning of Ikeda's *imaginative empathy* and how Soka Education can foster such virtue. The question of the community is a question underlying my exploration and did not become apparent to me until the end of the process. Nevertheless, I feel compelled to share this emotional background of my inquiry for methodological reasons. I believe, like Dewey, that philosophical inquiry should embrace the honesty characteristic of the empirical method, which enables anyone within a given community of inquiry to assess the findings of a particular researcher. Transparency with respect to the emotional motivations underlying my inquiry is an important point of reference for you, members of a community of inquiry on Soka Education, to judge my ideas and suggest improvements.

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[iii] Teachers College Catalogue 2005-2006. 28.

Imaginative Empathy in Ikeda's Philosophy of Soka Education

Human revolution is the one concept that threads together Daisaku Ikeda's life and philosophy. His vision of the transformation of society, in which Soka Education occupies a central role, emerges organically from a worldview centered on the inner transformation of a single individual. Consequently, a pertinent discussion of sustainable development as potentially resulting, or at least benefiting, from processes of Soka Education must be a discussion of sustainable development centered on the question of the inner transformation of the individual. That is, an ethical question.

In his speech "Education Toward Global Citizenship," delivered at Teachers College almost ten years ago, Ikeda offers a sketch of the ethical ideal of Soka Education: the global citizen. To describe global citizenship, Ikeda takes the three virtues of the Buddha and articulates them in a way relevant to the context of secular ethics for a global society:

> "a) The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life; b) The courage not to
> fear or deny difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different
> cultures and to grow from encounters with them; c) The compassion to maintain an
> imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends
> to those suffering in distant places." [iv]

In this paper, I discuss the meaning of *imaginative empathy* and how humanistic education and Soka Education in particular engages the students to develop *imaginative empathy*.

Empathy

Empathy is the capacity to partake on another human being's emotions. Evidently, a precondition for empathy is a minimum share of personal experiences of suffering and joy, as a point of reference for conceiving someone else's emotional experiences. However, empathy, at least in the Buddhist tradition from which Ikeda writes, is not the mere act of re-experiencing one's own sufferings and joys in terms of someone else's (where someone else's sufferings and joys act as triggers or reminders of one's past experiences). It is an act of genuine interpersonal emotional sharing.

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[iv] Daisaku Ikeda, *Soka Education* (Santa Monica: Middleway Press, 2001) 100-101.

Obviously, the question of the possibility of interpersonal emotional sharing raises a number of epistemological and metaphysical problems that need to be addressed. Even though Buddhism offers a sophisticated, satisfactory answer, I will, for the sake of time, simply establish that the question of interpersonal emotional sharing is possible by means of direct access to a kind of universal human nature. In other words, we can experience someone else's sufferings and joys not simply because they remind us of our own sufferings and joys specifically, but because in someone else's suffering and joy we recognize their and our humanity. Such working definition of empathy is appropriate for this investigation because it is both metaphysically accurate (according to Buddhism), and still maintains the universality of secular humanistic language that characterizes Ikeda's educational writings.

<u>Imagination: Coleridge's Conception</u>

Having established a working definition of empathy, now it is time to clarify how empathy interacts with imagination to conform Ikeda's expansive concept of *imaginative empathy*. For this, I introduce here Samuel Taylor Coleridge's conception of *imagination*.

Coleridge defines *imagination* as distinct from *fancy*, which is the rearrangement of previously possessed atomic perceptions and ideas into new, previously inexistent composites:

> "The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the
> order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical
> phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with
> the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made for them by
> the law of association." [v]

*Imagination*, in turn, is for Coleridge something that far surpasses the mere creativity of *fancy*; it is a kind of creative discovery of truth, which includes not only truth as it is actually manifest, but also in its potentiality. My good friend Mark Jonas puts it this way: "Imagination for Coleridge is the ability to see reality as it is, in its totality—to be able to apprehend truth not merely on the surface of things but behind them as well, and then to be able to communicate those things in *essentially* identical, but outwardly distinct ways."[vi]

Based on Coleridge's distinction, I claim that Ikeda's *imaginative empathy* in fact corresponds to the interaction of empathy with what Coleridge calls *imagination*. A similar interaction of empathy with *fancy*

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[v] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria,* (New York: Random House, 1951) 263.
[vi] Mark Jonas, "Rethinking Reason in America's High Schools: An Imaginative Response to John Dewey and the Problem of Modern Rationality." Unpublished.

would be an oxymoron, or at least it would represent a kind of fantasy, an illusion of empathy. Such fanciful illusion of empathy would correspond to an act of creative rearrangement of previous perceptions and ideas of suffering and joy drawn from one's personal memory into a new composition involving individuals from distant places and times. An effect of fanciful illusion of empathy is usually pursued by movies designed to "move" the audience into particular emotional directions. Fanciful illusion of empathy is also what the passer by experiences when struggles to empathize with the homeless person that he finds in the street. It is what I experienced as a ten year old when I attended a funeral for the first time as I made an effort to understand what it must be like for my friend to lose his father. In any case, fanciful illusion of empathy is characterized by a lack of epistemic import into the emotional experiences of others, which is in direct contradiction with the definition of empathy established here.

On the other hand, *imaginative empathy* corresponds to the act of imagining others' sufferings and joys based on an understanding the essence of those emotions as they are (an insight into an aspect of our shared humanity). *Imaginative empathy* is concerned with the essence of emotion, not the specifics of its manifestations. In fact, the details of how a particular emotion is manifestation can be reconstructed by means of *fancy*. In any case, the epistemic import does not operate at the level of the details of manifestation as accuracy of representation, but at the level of the essence of emotion. In other words, we do not feel empathy for another person simply when we understand the specifics of that person's circumstances. We feel empathy when we partake on the essence of the emotions that person is experiencing.

As it has been established, *imaginative empathy* is a moral virtue with particular epistemological requirements. The question now is: "What kind of moral education meets these epistemological demands and makes it possible to teach *imaginative empathy*?" I turn to John Dewey's philosophy of experience for an answer.

John Dewey's Philosophy of Experience.

There are two main reasons to consider Dewey's philosophy of experience as pertinent epistemological and metaphysical basis for a pedagogy that fosters *imaginative empathy*. On the one hand, it shares with Buddhism the basic epistemological premise of the oneness of self and environment and oneness of mind and body. On the other hand, in its clear humanistic approach, it privileges human interactions and regards ethics as not as fixated in a particular framework of rules and maxims, but as the art of creative, inner dialogue between primary experience and critical reflection. Pedagogically and ethically, it comes very close to Makiguchi's notion of education for *value creation*[vii].

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[vii] It is well known that Makiguchi was a great admirer of Dewey's work and it is possible that Makiguchi's pedagogical and ethical ideas of education for *value creation* were in part inspired by Dewey. Unfortunately, I lack concrete evidence to support this suggested connection.

Dewey's epistemology is expounded in his foremost 1925 book Experience and Nature, in which he claims that experience and nature are not ontologically separate. They are, in fact, part of a continuum, "experience" in the particular sense that Dewey gives to the word:

> "[Experience] is 'double-barrelled' in that it recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in an unanalyzed totality. 'Thing' and 'thought,' as James says in the same connection, are single barreled; they refer to products discriminated by reflection out of primary experience."[viii]

This seems but a simple observation. However, the separation of experience and nature is so engrained in our culture that the idea of a continuum of both "will seem [to many] like talking of a round square."[ix] And yet, the implications of this simple observation are great and many.

In his introduction to the 1988 edition of Experience and Nature, Sidney Hook explains that Dewey's epistemology did not simply erased all distinctions between "thing" and "thought," but that it recognized a continuity that made it possible to account for the mutual influence between them:

> "Dewey's…conception of experience does recognize the distinction between experienc*ing* and experienc*ed* (that is why he calls it a double-barrelled word), that far from *assuming* the continuity between thoughts and natural events, it is a view fortified by the cumulative results of the natural, biological-medical, and cultural disciplines. From the standpoint of scientific empiricism—which his critics profess to accept—thinking is a natural event or process, a form of behavior in which some natural events are used to direct and regulate other events. This approach explains why thinking makes a difference to the world, and accounts for the fact that thought can be practical, which according to Dewey is a complete mystery on his critics' traditional dualistic view."[x]

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[viii] John Dewey. *Experience and Nature*. Ed. Jo Ann Boydston, John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953 Volume I: 1925. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988). 18-19.

[ix] Ibid. 10.
[x] Sidney Hook "Introduction." Ed. Jo Ann Boydston, John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953 Volume I: 1925. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988). xii-xiii.

When we realize that thoughts can be practical; that ideas can have a concrete impact on the world because both (ideas, thoughts and the world, nature) are part of a continuum (aspects of an ontological unity), we are in the face of the ineluctable moral dimension of experience. The practical applicability of thoughts, which is properly accounted for in Dewey's collapse of experience and nature, implies both power and responsibility. This moral dimension that resides at the very heart of experience will become the grounds of the meliorating project of Dewey's philosophy. In other words, because thinking can affect concrete change in the world, it becomes a form of action. As action that can change the world, thinking possesses an inherent moral dimension. In response to this, Dewey develops a method of philosophy to renders knowledge, moral and aesthetic judgment less arbitrary and more meaningful. The original motivation is the sense of responsibility that stems from the power that his epistemology (the double-barreled nature of experience) assigns to thinking.

On the contrary, the ancient and modern philosophical traditions seem to forget, Dewey notes, what motivated their pursuit of knowledge in the first place. They neglect the primary experiences that inspired their ideas and that served as context for their observations of the world and rational conclusions. Classical and modern models of philosophical systems always begin with epistemology. Then, from epistemology, metaphysics is derived; from whose logical implications an ethical framework is, in turn, defined. From there, aesthetics, political theory and the other branches of the system grow. What Dewey shows is that classical and modern systems fail to acknowledge the moral grounds on which even their epistemology and metaphysics are based. Dewey clearly demonstrates that classical and modern philosophies regard that which is non-immediate, refined and abstracted, objects of systematic reflection, secondary, as primary. In this, they totally ignore the richness of primary experience. Dewey's empirical naturalism starts with the empirical to return to the empirical; it acknowledges the moral grounds of knowledge, its moral original motivation (which in the case of Dewey's is his meliorating project). I see this as a return of philosophy to the human, as an acknowledgement of the qualitative richness of human experience as an inevitable background to any inquiry:

> "[T]he cognitive never *is* all-inclusive: that is, when the material of a prior non-cognitive experience is the object of knowledge, it and the act of knowing are themselves included within a new and wider non-cognitive experience—and *this* situation can never be transcended."[xi]

As the reader probably already noticed, the moral grounds of knowledge to which I am referring is double-sided. One side is the necessarily moral nature of the original motive for pursuing knowledge, which

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[xi] John Dewey. *Experience and Nature.* Ed. Jo Ann Boydston, <u>John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953 Volume I: 1925</u>. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988). 30.

determines the choices of observation, analysis, etc. made during the process of knowing and which, consequently, leaves a mark in the final product. The other side, inseparable from the first, is the moral responsibility that comes from the awareness that engaging in thinking is not neutral endeavor, removed from reality, but it is in fact action that affects change in the world. Classical and modern models of philosophy ignore these moral dimensions inherent in knowledge itself because they ignore the fact that experience is the origin of knowledge. These models allow for endless, abstract speculation with no regard for the impact that ideas can have on the world. The illusion is that the process of knowing takes place in a realm entirely separate from nature. Thus, there are no moral implications to knowing. Dewey's perspicacious observation is that the moral origins of those philosophical traditions were the values of a class that despised labor and desired to justify their lifestyle of contemplation and reflection (only possible through the labor of others).

When Dewey says that the cognitive is never all-inclusive, he means that there is no such thing as absolute or objective knowledge, that knowledge always takes place in a situation, in a non-cognitive context that can never be transcended. In this sense, for the same reasons that Sartre recognized existentialism to be humanism[xii], Dewey proposes an alternative name for his empirical naturalist method: naturalistic humanism: "[T]he philosophy here presented may be termed,…taking 'experience' in its usual signification, naturalistic humanism."[xiii] "Experience" in its usual signification refers to the experience of being a human being in the world, which is, precisely the context that can never be transcended.

Following from what has been said, particularly from the question of the inevitable human-experience-centeredness of all knowledge and the necessary moral dimension that this fact brings to the act of pursuing knowledge, is the importance of honesty as a central aspect of Dewey's empirical philosophy.  I identify three reasons for this:

1) Since knowledge is experience (as a process), the empirical method  should not only report the conclusions of the investigation, but make the process explicit, in order for other people to replicate it and partake in the experience of knowledge (as a process). In this sense, communication of knowledge means allowing for the experience of knowledge to be shared.

2) Since knowledge is always subjective, it is only through a community of knowledge, through communication, that the vice of arbitrariness of meaning can be corrected. This is what Dewey means in his criticism of traditional nominalism:

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[xii] See Jean-Paul Sartre's "The Humanism of Existentialism" Ed. Wade Baskin *Essays in Existentialism.* New York: Kensington, 1993 (p. 31-62)
[xiii] John Dewey. *Experience and Nature.* Ed. Jo Ann Boydston, <u>John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953 Volume I: 1925.</u> (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988). 10.

"Language is always a form of action and in its instrumental use is always a means of concentrated action for an end, while at the same time it finds in itself all the goods of its possible consequences…The idea put forth about the connection of meaning with language is not to be confused with traditional nominalism. It does not imply that meaning and essence are adventitious and arbitrary. The defect of nominalism lies in its virtual denial of interaction and association."[xiv]

Dewey has much to say about the importance of communication and the role of the community of learning in the process of knowing. However, I simply want to mention that the importance of communication and the community in knowing demands honesty from the philosophic method.

3) I think a third reason for the importance of honesty in Dewey's empirical philosophy is the fact that, in the recognition that knowledge takes place in experience, a full, honest account of this experience of knowing in the richness of its precariousness is in itself a celebration of humanity. The pride and love for human nature that Dewey's empirical philosophy exhibits (in Dewey's own style) stands in clear contrast with the embarrassment that characterize other traditions that tend to eliminate or, if impossible, to hide the human in knowing. The precarious, the "irrational" aspects of experience are not appreciated as integral aspects of the production of knowledge, but are regarded as residues of the process, that once a theoretical conclusion is reached (secondary object) can be discarded and forgotten.

In Dewey's full embrace of experience as integral of the process of knowing I see an expression of assuming full responsibility for the world, a responsibility that, as I mentioned earlier, derives from the collapse of experience with nature. The other side of the profound sense of responsibility underlying Dewey's ideas is the meliorating project to which his entire philosophy is devoted. In fact, it seems to me that this is the necessary imperative of a humanism that fully embraces its moral origins and recognizes its power to affect change in the world: that if it has any reason to exist it must be for the sake of improving existence.

When philosophy is not divorced from practice, it is art, in the sense that Dewey gives to the word: art as the culmination of nature. As it has been already suggested, yet not clearly stated, art in the Deweyan sense is meaningful action that affects the world. Art as meaningful action is informed by aesthetic sensitivity, moral judgment and intelligence cultivated in previous experiences, through a series of trials, errors and correction of errors. Dewey postulates his notion of philosophy as, which combines pursuit of meaning and productive activity into one, in contrast with the traditional idea of meaning and activity as separate:

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[xiv] Ibid. 144-145.

"The idea that work, productive activity, signifies action carried on for merely extraneous ends, and the idea that happiness signifies surrender of mind to the thrills and excitations of the body are one and the same idea. The first notion marks the separation of activity from meaning, and the second marks the separation of receptivity from meaning. Both separations are inevitable as far as experience fails to be art:—when the regular, repetitious, and the novel, contingent in nature fail to sustain and inform each other in a productive activity possessed of immanent and directly enjoyed meaning."[xv]

The implication of this passage is that philosophy, which is precisely the "productive activity possessed of immanent and directly enjoyed meaning" through which the precarious and the stable inform each other, renders experience as art.

Dewey, then, writes:

"[If the implications of the position that puts art and creation before contemplation and taste are carried through], it would then be seen that science is an art, that art is practice, and that the only distinction worth drawing, is not between practice and theory, but between those modes of practice that are not intelligent, not inherently and immediately enjoyable, and those which are full of enjoyed meanings. When this perception dawns, it will be a commonplace that art—the mode of activity that is charged with meanings capable of immediately enjoyed possession—is the complete culmination of nature, and that 'science' is properly a handmaiden that conducts natural events to this happy issue. Thus would disappear the separations that trouble present thinking: division of everything into nature *and* experience, of experience into practice *and* theory, art *and* science, of art into useful *and* fine, menial *and* free."[xvi]

The distinction between theory and practice, then, becomes irrelevant, and the distinction that matters is that between intelligent and not intelligent practice. If philosophy is to be considered an art that affects change in the world to improve it, it must be able to account for the richness of experience in all its precariousness. Otherwise, all that philosophy would be able to offer would be a theoretical, analytically reduced picture of the world. Highly theoretical pictures of the world and humanity not only tend to be extremely hard to apply practically in every day experience (in aesthetics and morals, for example), but they

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[xv] Ibid. 271.
[xvi] Ibid. 269.

create their own sets of theoretical problems when inconsistent with empirical experience. In short, they might provide meaning to experience, but in their arbitrariness instead of opening up spaces for meaning, they shrink experience: they force experience, which is vast in the multiplicity of its precariousness, to fit into the narrow picture of theory.

The significance of Dewey's philosophy of experience for our investigation on pedagogy that fosters *imaginative empathy* resides in the fact that once experience and nature are collapsed into a unity, it follows that philosophy must become art, as a process of creative, internal dialogue between primary experience and critical reflection. Moreover, this internal dialogue must be expanded to the community as an expression of honesty and responsibility derived from the moral grounds of knowing. From this conception of philosophy a notion of moral education as a process of improvement of one's life by means of creative, internal dialogue and dialogue in the community must follow. In other words, Soka Education.

## Conclusion:

The fathers of Soka Education were men of action (Ikeda still is, of course). In a paper presented at last year's Soka Education Conference, Mr. Masayuki Shiohara, Chief Administrator of the Soka Education Research Center at Soka University, insightfully commented on the fact that Makiguchi had chosen to devote his time and efforts to train his disciples even when that meant sacrificing the completion of his writings: "Makiguchi's energies shifted from publication activities to one of enlightening each and every individual."[xvii]

The philosophical sources of Soka Education are not to be found solely in the writings of Makiguchi and his successors, but its locus resides primarily in the actions and ideas of the three founding fathers of Soka and the bond of mentor and disciple that runs through them:

> "[T]he origin of Soka Education goes back to Makiguchi and his vision for
> establishing Soka schools, which was succeeded by Toda, and then by Ikeda, who
> actualized it. Therefore, we, at the Soka Education Research Center, consider Soka
> Education to encompass the educational practices and principles of these three
> individuals."[xviii]

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[xvii] Masayuki Shiohara, "For Students Who Wish to Explore the Meaning of Soka Education: Current Research and Challenges." *Soka Education: Present and Future. Proceedings of the Conference.* (Aliso Viejo: Soka Education Student Research Project, 2005) 62.
[xviii] Ibid. 62

The pedagogical preeminence that the tradition of Soka Education has given to the relationship of mentor and disciple over method or abstract principles suggests that, when considered from the standpoint of Soka Education, it is appropriate to explore the question of moral education as rooted in human relationships. Ikeda writes:

> "The experience of a truly human life—genuine happiness—can only be realized in
> the bonds and interactions between people…by persevering in spite of these
> conflicts, transforming them and restoring and rejuvenating the bonds among us, we
> can forge and polish our individuality and character."[xix]

And in reference to the most important aspect of the processes and institutions of education, he adds: "Most important in the teacher's attitude. Human interaction is the key."[xx]

This is the reason why I bring Dewey's philosophy of experience into my discussion of the meaning of Ikeda's *imaginative empathy*: because Dewey makes it clear that concepts like *imaginative empathy* are not simply theoretical concepts but are modes of praxis or manifestations of philosophy as art, which can only be learned *in experience,* particularly in interaction with other human beings. More specifically, moral virtues like *imaginative empathy* are learned best through a particular kind of human interaction: the interaction with models of ethical behavior and inspirations for ethical action. What makes Soka Education unique in teaching moral virtues is that it provides situations for the student to partake in interactions with ethical ideals and sources of inspiration: the community of Soka.

According to Dewey, it follows from the collapse of experience and nature that the development of moral virtues must be undertaken as an art in which primary experiences of suffering and joy are refined and made more meaningful and less arbitrary by the secondary experience of critical reflection. The harmonious, creative dialogue of primary and secondary experiences requires a kind of artistic skill, and it is precisely this requisite that demands the model of ethical behavior and inspiration for ethical action as conditions for moral education. Mere richness and variety of primary experiences of suffering and joy can be sufficient for a rough empathetic response. Thorough learning of the liberal arts can be sufficient for a sophisticated theoretical understanding of the sufferings and joys of people around the world. However, it is only through the creative integration of the two, direct experience and cultivation of mind and spirit, that *imaginative empathy* can be attained. The kind of artistic skill required for this integration can only be learned from another human being, for it is the quintessential human quality. Some call it wisdom.

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[xix] Daisaku Ikeda, "Serving the Essential Needs of Education." *Soka Education* (Santa Monica: Middleway Press, 2001) 74.
[xx] Ibid. 75.

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