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The Soka Education Student Research Project is an autonomous organization at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, California.

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SOKA EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2010:

EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:
THEORY AND PRACTICE

SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
ALISO VIEJO, CALIFORNIA
FEBRUARY 13TH & 14TH, 2009
PAULING 216
Soka Education Conference 2010 Program
Pauling 216

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

Our sixth annual Soka Education Conference takes place on February 13th and 14th, 2010. This year’s conference, themed “Education for Social Justice: Theory and Practice,” will be a venue for people to take a candid stance toward both the theoretical and pragmatic aspects of social justice in education and society. In the hope of having a holistic dialogue on social justice, paper presentations and workshops held by students and alumni will address a wide range of topics.

In this volume are the works of students and alumni, each with their own interpretation of the relationship between education and democracy. Mr. Gonzalo Obelleiro takes a closer look at the writings of Daisaku Ikeda in order to understand his philosophy of cosmopolitan education, while Ms. Ruby Nagashima investigates how education can work for social justice through the Residential Life programs at SUA. Ms. Elaine Sandoval considers the role of music education in society, particularly looking at the Venezuelan example, while Ms. Kajal Gulati writes about the effects of Self-Help Groups in education and social justice in India. Ms Lisa McMillan and Ms. Rekha Gokhale use their experiences as teachers at a Microcosmos kindergarten in Japan to describe ways of teaching social justice in the classroom. Mr. Eric Kunimoto writes about humanitarian competition and how the Tragedies of the Commons and Anti-Commons may be re-written. And Mr. Jean Marcus Silva elucidates our current system of law and how Soka Education may better contribute to our future. Workshops and special topics sessions will also be facilitated by various SUA students, faculty, and alumni, with the goal of increasing audience dialogue and interaction at the conference, and providing the venue to discuss particular facets of Soka Education.

We sincerely hope that this conference will help impart the ways in which Soka Education can be applied to all fields, and especially the role it plays in bringing about social justice in our societies. Our anticipation is that this conference can stimulate thought and dialogue on Soka Education, and that it will help people internalize its values in daily life and practice. This year, we are honored to welcome keynote speaker Dr. Jim Garrison from Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, where he specializes in the Philosophy of Education, pragmatism, and especially the philosophy of John Dewey. Dr. Garrison was a past president of the John Dewey Society, and at this conference, he will reflect on his studies of Dewey and his thoughts on Soka Education, also sharing with us his dialogue with SUA Founder Daisaku Ikeda.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge all of the presenters and facilitators, our keynote speaker Jim Garrison, SUA President Danny Habuki, Jay Heffron and the Pacific Basin Research Center (PBRC), our alumni advisors, SUA’s dependable IT workers, and student volunteers, amongst others, for their behind the scenes work and continuous efforts in making this conference possible. Their support and commitment are truly appreciated. We would also like to express our utmost gratitude to Tunesaburo Makiguchi and his successors, Josei Toda and Daisaku Ikeda, who have lived their lives dedicated to actualizing Soka Education.

And thank you, for your attendance of the conference and your continued interest and support in Soka Education.

Sincerely,
Soka Education Student Research Project
Soka Education Conference Committee
**Eric Kunimoto:** Hello Soka! My name is Eric Kunimoto and I am a proud graduate of the SUA, class of 2008. I traveled to SUA from my home state of Maryland, and after graduating, I returned home to attend Law School at the University of Maryland in Baltimore. It’s been a grueling but fulfilling experience! I’ve interned at a number of places since attending UM Law, the most recently being the International Rescue Committee, an international NGO serving refugees, asylees, and displaced persons around the world. This March, I will be heading to Beijing to assist organizations implement micro-finance projects and broader development plans. While attending Law School, I became deeply interested in the concept of Property and America’s fascination with and desire for it. Today, some of world’s greatest challenges have to do with property: Economic recession, global warming, the lack of gas and water. My paper touches on the property dilemma that underlies these issues and discuss how Soka Education may play a role in surmounting that obstacle.

**Elaine Chang Sandoval** is currently a Junior at Soka University of America. Originally from San Jose, California, she is recently returned from her study abroad experience in Taipei, Taiwan and Nanjing, China. She began the studies of music at a young age with the flute and piano, and began to also study conducting due to her responsibilities in various music ensembles at SUA. Her passions include music education and Soka Education, and she in fact first heard about El Sistema in Venezuela from an alumna that presented at the 2008 Soka Education Conference. After SUA she hopes to pursue graduate studies in music and/or music education.

**Ruby Nagashima** joined Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo as Residence Hall Coordinator in July 2007. In that role, she oversees the residence halls, assists in developing and implementing the Residential Life Co-Curricular Model, supervises paraprofessional staff and coordinates student staff training. Nagashima graduated from Soka University of America in 2006 with a BA in Liberal Arts. She received her M.S.Ed. in Education, Culture and Society from the Foundations and Practices in Education Division at the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education in 2007. Nagashima received the President’s Volunteer Service Award from President Obama for her dedication to building a culture of citizenship, service and responsibility in America through work with US Fund for UNICEF in 2009. Nagashima is a native speaker of English and Japanese and is proficient in Spanish. Nagashima resides in Aliso Viejo, California.

**Dr. Jim Garrison** is a professor of philosophy of education at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. He is a past-president of the Philosophy of Education Society as well as the immediate past-president of the John Dewey Society. His major interest is philosophical pragmatism, especially the philosophy of John Dewey. He highly values Soka Education because it aims the actualization of each student's unique potential as well as the implementation of student-centered education. He is currently engaged in a series of published dialogues with SUA founder Daisaku Ikeda and Larry Hickman, head of the Center for Dewey Studies.
Gonzalo Obelleiro is a graphic artist and a doctoral student of philosophy and education at Teachers College, Columbia University. In his native city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, he pursued studies in art, architecture and design. In pursuit of wider intellectual interests, he joined the first graduating class of Soka University of America, where he discovered his passion for philosophy and developed a commitment to education as a means for personal enlightenment and social change. His current work focuses on the educational philosophies of Daisaku Ikeda and John Dewey in relation to the ideas of value creation and cosmopolitan education.

Kajal Gulati: I received my Bachelor's degree from SUA in 2006 as the second graduating class. After graduating, I received my Master’s in Public Administration in International Development from Cornell University. I currently work at the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, D.C. At IFPRI, I am part of a team working on strengthening information, national capacity, and analysis for improved food security. Before joining IFPRI, I worked briefly at the Grameen Foundation in Seattle. At Grameen, I worked on the Community Knowledge Worker project in Uganda linking farmers with extension and other information services using ICTs.

Jean Marcus Silva is living his fiction and writing about it. But fundamentally, his own views can only work if Education is priority. This is the reason he joins mankind here and there to discuss the future, or possible ones, as an account of the safety for upcoming stories.

Rekha Gokhale and Lisa McMillan: “Social Justice Begins in the Kindergarten!” This presentation is a unique assimilation of experiences of SUA alumnae Lisa McMillan from Texas, U.S.A. and Rekha Gokhale from Pune, India. Lisa and Rekha taught English at the Microcosmos International Preschool and Kindergarten in Tokyo, an institution dedicated to actualizing Mr. Makiguchi and Founder of SUA Dr. Daisaku Ikeda’s principle of Soka or Value Creating Education. In this presentation, we will discuss points covered in the paper and also include an exciting exercise to demonstrate techniques of fostering respect in a kindergarten setting.
Humanitarian Competition: Re-Writing the Tragedies of the Commons and Anti-Commons

Eric Kunimoto ¹

Class of 2008

I. INTRODUCTION

A major aspect of Social Justice is concerned with the sustainable and equitable use of resources within a commons, or a collectively owned space. The concern is essentially economic: The efficiency of management within a commons can determine how equitably those resources are consumed. Unfortunately, ownership logic encourages the inefficient management of those commons, which often leads to problematic overuse and underuse of resources, hindering equitable

¹ J.D. candidate 2011, University of Maryland School of Law. I would like to sincerely thank the SESRP for allowing me to share my thoughts on the confluence of Soka Education and the Law. I would also like to specially thank the SUA donors who have invested their hope in the success of this Project and who have allowed Soka University to develop and house an initiative worthy of spreading the profound philosophy of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda, and SUA Founder, Daisaku Ikeda. I am grateful that I am able to contribute to the advancement of Soka Education in the United States.
resource distribution. The overuse resulting from this common pool resource dilemma is called “Tragedy of the Commons” while ultimate underuse is termed “Tragedy of the Anti-commons.”

Academics and policy makers have had difficulty avoiding these two Tragedies and finding the equitable solutions because of a faulty premise and a conceptual wall. They erroneously perceive the solutions to these tragedies to lie on a linear spectrum based on degrees of property ownership. In other words, they perceive these problems as conceptual zero-sum competitions over property.

I argue that a completely new conceptual framework based on Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s “Humanitarian Competition” may provide more socially just solutions to the common pool resource dilemma leading to these two Tragedies. Humanitarian competition, in contrast with strict proprietary conflict, does not use the language of ownership. Instead, a humanitarian competition is premised on the notion of constantly and collectively creating value for the sake of society as a whole, rather than fighting over existing wealth. People cannot create physical resources per se, but they can create the value that they attach to it. Based on this conceptual framework, resources are over consumed or under consumed only to the extent that we stop creating value. By re-conceptualizing the underlying property dilemma in this way, the Social Justice concern of sustainable resource use becomes a function of moral value creation; advancing Social Justice becomes contingent on an education that promotes the collective creation of value.

II. THE ENDURING COMMON POOL RESOURCE DILEMMA AND ITS TRAGEDIES

A. The Common Pool Resource Dilemma

Common pool resource dilemmas describe situations in which a common resource acted upon by individual interests, while immediately profitable to the individual, lead to a lower total net benefit than if that resource was regulated to support longer term community interests. The dilemma implicates Social Justice because profit-maximizing behavior acted upon by any one individual claiming a particular common resource will invariably cause the inequitable distribution of that resource to the larger community.

For a common pool resource to exist there must be a commons, or a collectively owned space. That space does not have to be physical, but there must be a common market within which people share, exchange, trade, and interact with each other and the resources that are available in that market. A few examples include the economy (the marketplace of money and goods), the real estate (the marketplace of physical land), the atmosphere (currently, markedly the marketplace of greenhouse gases) and intellectual property (the marketplace of ideas). Practically anything can be transformed into a commons if there is more than one actor vying for access to the resources that make up any particular market; the possibilities are endless.

The common pool resource dilemma is problematic because, if left unchecked, in most cases, the individual chooses to act on his self-interests. This individual profit-maximizing behavior leads to kinds of tragedies: the Tragedy of the Commons and the Tragedy of the Anti-Commons.

B. The Tragedy of the Commons

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2 Early philosophers like Aristotle explains this selfish nature by claiming that “that which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it . . . [E]ach thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest; and only when is himself concerned as an individual.” Michael Heller, THE GRIDLOCK ECONOMY: HOW TOO MUCH OWNERSHIP WRECKS MARKETS, STOPS INNOVATION, AND COSTS LIVES 145 (Basic Books) (2008), citing Aristotle, THE POLITICS AND THE CONSTITUTION OF ATHENS 33 (Stephen Everson ed., Benjamin Jowett trans., Cambridge University Press 1996).
The Tragedy of the Commons describes how limited common pool resources are over consumed when private actors act purely out of self-interest. The Tragedy of the Commons was first introduced by Economist Garret Hardin in 1968 in *Science.* Hardin uses the example of multiple herdsmen keeping their cattle in an open pasture accessible by all. In this setting, Hardin argues, any logical herdsmen intending to maximize his own utility would continue to add cattle to the pasture. After all, adding one animal would increase his profits from selling the cattle by a utility of +1. Of course, adding another animal would contribute to overgrazing the pasture, but that effect is borne by all herdsmen, so the utility is only a fraction of -1. This self-profiting mentality leads every herdsmen to add more and more cattle to the pasture, but the devastating effect of it all is the complete destruction of the land due to overgrazing. Hardin writes:

“Therein is the tragedy. Every man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all . . .”

Today, the Tragedy of the Commons occurs all the time. It occurs every time oil and gas reserves are depleted, every time one popular melody is overplayed on the radio, every time your cell phone drops calls because of spectrum overuse, and every time your flight is delayed because of congested air traffic. The Tragedy of the Commons is not simply overuse, but it is overuse in a commons that is caused by a significant self interest for individual profit, coupled with a conscious disregard for the well-being of others.

C. The Tragedy of the Anti-Commons

The opposite effect to the Tragedy of the Commons is the Tragedy of the Anti-Commons. The Tragedy arises when too many self-interested private actors own a common resource and the burdensome multi-party decision-making disincentivizes or completely eliminates the possibility of utilizing that resource. Legal scholar Michael Heller uses the example of empty Moscow store fronts during the early 1990s to describe the Tragedy. In 1991, Moscow was transitioning from a closed-market socialist USSR government to an open-market Russian government. In that transition, instead of transferring coherent bundles of property rights to people, Russia's reformist leaders made the disastrous decision to appropriate real estate in such a way that transferred limited private property rights. For example, the individual having the right to sell a bakery would not be the

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4 *Id.* at 1244.
5 *Id.*
6 *Id.*
7 *Id.*
9 *Id.* at 633
10 Heller attributes this decision to a mounting threat of Soviet restoration of power. Heller, *supra* note 2, at 145. He cites coup attempts, attacks on government buildings, and increasing raid as examples of increasing pressure and the reason why “locking in reform quickly was the overriding goal” for reformists. *Id.* Heller does acknowledge, however, the Russia’s housing privatization had its successes. In the early 1990s, Russia’s reform packages helped Russians buy, rent, and sell homes and apartments where they were unable to before. *Id.* at 144.
same person who had the right to lease or right to manage the bakery. Alternatively, the right to sell, lease, or manage may be distributed among all of them equally. Either way, however, decisions regarding the management of the entire store necessitate consensus between all owners—a strategy that has a propensity for failure in a new market that encourages individual profit maximization.

In Figure 1 below, A, B, and C represent those private property owners under a normal private property scheme and under Russia’s anti-commons property scheme. Under the latter scheme, fragmented ownership rights in store 1 make consensual store-wide decisions difficult, especially when the new capitalistic Russian government was encouraging competition. For instance, if hypothetical entrepreneur D wanted to invest in store 1, he would have to potentially make deals with A, B, and C separately. The current owners A, B, and C, however, in finalizing any deal with D, would likely have difficulty cooperating and deciding on fair sale prices because each would feel entitled to the most profit. D, therefore, would be better off investing in property that was free of ownership fragmentation. Moreover, the lack of investment in the store, and the lack of cooperation between A, B, and C would ultimately amount to little business and empty stores. This is exactly what happened in Moscow. Kiosks, small mobile start-up stores, became the predominant option over privately owned stores for new entrepreneurs because of their ease of acquisition and management. The kiosks became “icons of capitalist transition” and represented the strength of un-fragmented private property rights even after the fall of the Soviet regime.

![Diagram of private property vs. anti-commons property](image)

**Figure 1: Michael Heller’s diagram of comparing the normal way of distributing private property rights v. how Moscow created store owners.**

The Tragedy of the Anti-Commons describes underuse the same way the Tragedy of the Commons describes overuse. The fundamental attitude of individual profit maximization keeps individuals from contributing to the overall health of their commons. In the case of Moscow in the early 1990s, potentially profitable stores remained empty even after dramatic reforms encouraging privatization and open market. In other cases, the effect of the tragedy is even more severe and avoiding it could have diverted the loss of thousands of lives. Perhaps the least known example is how the Tragedy of the Anti-Commons infiltrated the prescription drug market commons. A few years ago, a large pharmaceutical company had reportedly developed a cure for Alzheimer’s disease but in order for the company to finalize its development, it had to pay biotech firms for its use of

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12 For example, if there were three private property owners in the bakery, each property owner could end up with a 1/3 right to, for instance, sell.
13 Heller, *supra* note 2, at 146.
14 Heller, *supra* note 2, at 146.
15 Heller, *supra* note 2, at 146.
16 Heller, *supra* note 2, at 146.
17 Heller, *supra* note 8, at 671.
their patented medical research tools, procedures, and findings. When the pharmaceutical company approached the biotech firms, the firms required the pharmaceutical company to pay exorbitant sums of money to use their patented procedures. The pharmaceutical company, without the funds to buy off all patent holders, had no other choice but to halt the development of their Alzheimer’s cure, unless it wanted to break patent law. Here, just like in all Tragedies of the Anti-Commons, the desire for private gain (of the biotech firms) led to the underutilization of the resources available in the medical commons (prescription medicine), and presumably cost thousands of lives. This kind of severity of underuse resulting from the Tragedy of the Anti-Commons could arguably be less forgiving than the effects of the Tragedy of the Commons.

III. FUNDAMENTAL FLAWS IN CONCEPT OF PROPERTY CAUSING THE TRAGEDIES
A. The Dynamics of Property and Ownership and how they lead to Tragedy

The Tragedies of the Commons and Anti-Commons are both functions of the desire for self-profit in the realm of property. Therefore, to understand these two Tragedies in context, there must be an understanding of the rules regulating property. Broadly and vaguely speaking, property has to do with the relationship people have with things with regards to their rights of ownership. Therefore, it would be incorrect to say that a piece of paper in and of itself is property. Instead, it would be more accurate to say that the piece of paper is an object that is involved in a property relationship with its owner. The social, economic, and legal rules governing property say that because I have purchased that piece of paper, it is now mine. Before I bought it, it was presumably in ownership by the store. However, at that point, the store’s property rights may have been at least legally limited to its sale and distribution, whereas I, as the consumer, may have more ownership rights to do as I please. If I burn the paper and use it toward burning down another’s house, the laws governing property say that I, as the owner of that paper that burned down the house, should be liable for arson. Property describes the dynamic relationship of ownership between owner and ownee/thing being owned.

Furthermore, ownership is a one-dimensional phenomenon. It is a zero-sum game that rewards some at the expense of taking away from others. Ownership views the world as filled with limited resources and explains that a particular person may own more that resource than others. Oil, for example, is a resource arguably at its peak in terms of availability. It is obvious to anyone that the more oil that company A takes, the less oil for companies B and C. Of course, B and C can trade with A for its oil, but the limited availability of oil itself remains constant. In this way, ownership can be viewed as a give-and-take dynamic resting on a linear spectrum of have and have-nots.

18 There were, presumably, many biotech firms with patents involved in the development of the potential Alzheimer’s cure due to the large biotech revolution that had the effect of private investors pouring a significant amount of money into the development of new drugs and medical inventions. Heller, supra note 2, at 4-5.
19 Id. at 5.
20 Id.
21 A 2006 study conducted by an interdisciplinary team of researchers found that the tragedy of the commons “seem to elicit more individualistic behavior than commons dilemmas,” and the latter is “more prone to underuse than commons dilemmas are to overuse.” Id. citing Steven Stewart and David J. Bjornstad, “An Experimental Investigation of Predictions and Symmetries in the Tragedies of the Commons and Anticommons,” JOINT INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT, NO. JIEE 2002-07 (August 2002), 17.

22 Colin J. Campbell and Jean H. Laherrere, The End of Cheap Oil?, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, March 1998 at 79 (discussing the imminence of peak oil within ten years).
23 This is what I call the “ownership spectrum.”
Finally, ownership is important because we attach economic value to it. The creed we live by is ‘the more we have, the better off we are.’ To use a past example, oil is economically valuable because people pay large sums of money to use the fugitive resource to power our machines – most notably our cars. Indeed, this is the logic that leads to Tragedies of the Commons and Anti-Commons. There is an economic incentive behind owning more, so the economically rational person will do as much as he can to gain the most profit for himself in a competition for resources. When he shares ownership rights with others, whether in an open ownership scheme or in a limited ownership scheme, he will distribute burdens and keep benefits to himself.

These characteristics of property and ownership help us understand why common pool resource dilemmas are so tragic. The Tragedies of the Commons and Anti-Commons lie at opposite ends of the linear ownership spectrum. At one extreme is a commons that is open to all; at the other end is a space accessible only by select people. Each can be potentially disastrous when self-interested people are influenced by ownership logic that inherently encourages individual profit maximizing behavior. In an open access property scheme, or in a true commons, that logic will amount to disastrous overuse; in an anti-commons, the same logic will result in wasteful underuse.

B. Historical responses to the Tragedies and their enduring problems

Ultimately, economically optimal ownership schemes will strike “a fragile balance between the two extremes of overuse and underuse.” In diagram 2, Michael Heller shows some examples of ownership schemes along the ownership spectrum and identifies healthy mediums between the extremes of open access and full exclusion.

![Diagram of Ownership Schemes](image)

Figure 2: Michael Heller’s diagram of the spectrum of ownership schemes.

There are a number of ways to strike a balance within this linear spectrum of ownership and avoid the tragedies at either extreme. “Conquest and trade, privatization and cultivation, custom and regulation” are all means by which private market actors and government can fix common pool

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24 This ownership scheme is a true commons, or an open access scheme.
25 This ownership scheme is otherwise called the anti-commons, limited commons, or fragmented commons.
26 Heller, supra note 8, at 19.
27 The affect of imposing more exclusions, or allowing more fragmented ownership, indeed often has the effect of balancing extreme open access to create a healthy balance of ownership. This healthy dose of fragmented ownership is often called the “comedy of the commons.” Carol M. Rose, The Comedy of the Commons: Custom, Commerce, and Inherently Public Property, 53 U. Chi. L. Rev. 711, 774 (1986).
28 Heller, supra note 8, at 41. The “zone of cooperative and market-based solutions” refers to the healthy range of ownership schemes that can be produced by specific interactions between private and public actors. These middle range solutions can be produced through a number of tools I mention immediately below.
resource dilemmas. Conquest involves war and control over resource through domination. Privatization essentially allows private market forces to dictate resource distribution. Custom forms practices of resource distribution and use through example. Finally, regulation is a form of ownership control by a centralized authority.

A prime contemporary example that involves both tragedies and the possibility of a variety of responses to those tragedies is the issue of global warming. The commons in this case is the global atmosphere and the tragedy results from people and countries emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and in effect, increasing the temperature of Earth’s surface. The Tragedy is serious. In 2001, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that average global temperatures will increase by between 2.5 and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100, a 60 percent increase over the level within six years. The 2007, IPCC concluded that “warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as it now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global average sea level.” The rise in global temperatures have resulted in more than 40% increase in extinctions of animal and plant species, decreasing availability of water due to increasing drought, 30% loss of global coastal wetlands, and increased death rates due to heat increasing heat waves, floods, and droughts.

This global Tragedy of the Commons is the sum of self-profit-motivated actions taken by people all over the world, particularly the large, industrialized nations that utilize coal as a means of power, emit carbon dioxide and other fossil fuels from automobiles and large buildings, and continue to deforest their land and thereby accelerate the effects of greenhouse gas emissions. In 2007, the heavily developing China passed the United States as the largest emitter of greenhouse gases and contributed for two-thirds of the growth of greenhouse gas emissions in the world that year. Historically, however, the United States has emitted the most greenhouse gases and accounts for three times as much as China’s.

The Tragedy of the Anti-Commons shows its face in the global effort to fight climate change. One of the leading academics on environmental law and policy stated that “the reductions in global emissions will require an unprecedented degree of international cooperation between the industrialized countries and the largest, most rapidly growing developing countries.” However, as recently as the December 2009 Global Climate Conference in Copenhagen, the world continued its stalemate with regards to finding international solutions to the global problem. Each of the five major industrialized nations participating in the talks owns a significant portion of the global atmospheric commons and has a stake in how those commons are managed. At the conference, each nation acknowledged the importance of curbing emissions for the sake of the overall health of the world, but intently vouched for standards that would not compromise the economic development resulting from their own emissions. Naturally, the talks finished with no binding

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29 Id.
31 IPCC, supra note 30, at 2 (emphasis added).
32 Id. at 10, Figure SPM7.
33 Elisabeth Rosenthal, China Clearly Overtakes U.S. as Leading Emitter of Climate-Warming Gases, N.Y. TIMES, June 14, 200.
34 Percival, supra note 30, at 1157 (2009).
35 Id. at 1144 (2009).
agreements and no concrete goals or new international emission standards. In effect, the tragedy of global warming continues at the same pace and rate as before.

The impact of the Tragedy of the Anti-Commons came to surface more intensely after Copenhagen. The European Union stated that Copenhagen was a “great failure” because “other nations had rejected targets and a timetable for the rest of the world to sign on to binding emissions reductions.” China’s top climate negotiator argued that his country should not have to control its emissions to the extent they are generated by the production of goods and exports that others consume. U.S. President Obama, although calling the climate talks “an unprecedented breakthrough,” acknowledged that it fell short of what was required to combat global warming.

The international climate talks at Copenhagen represented a modern-day regulatory approach to attempt to solve the Tragedies causing and resulting from global warming. Clearly, that approach has thus far fell short of completely resolving the tragedies. In theory, the anti-commons tragedy could be resolved through war and conquest and eliminating opponents unsympathetic to the cause of curbing global emissions (or vice-versa). Starting a war, however, would not be viable because the tremendous cost of money and lives it would cost. Another approach would be trade and privatization. Although not yet realized on the international level, in 1990 the U.S. passed amendments to the U.S. Clean Air Act which allowed it to utilize a successful cap and trade system by which the federal government would limit the total sum of emissions within the country and allow emitters to trade and sell rights to emit between themselves. Finally, customs may serve as yet another alternative, which seem to be the aim of eco-friendly countries like Sweden, who houses the world’s largest solar production plant.

While these solutions are no doubt necessary, they underscore enduring issues of sustainability and equity embedded in the Tragedies. To what extent can these mechanisms actually confront the problem of limited resources rather than simply redistribute ownership rights? The more fundamental issue plaguing these Tragedies is its underlying concept of ownership. By using the language of ownership, these Tragedies are particularized into a zero-sum game of have and have-nots. When wars break out, one country may amass resources from defeated countries, but their stock continues to be limited to the original total sum of that resource’s availability in the world. When trade happens, a particular party is simply collecting a bigger portion of the pie. When markets are privatized, the responsibility of resource sustainability is simply shifted to private actors. Customs, too, do not resolve the limitations of ownership, especially when they are not advanced by people holding the most influence over the management of resources. It is within this problematic context that the more than 70 year old philosophy of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, and particularly his conception of a “Humanitarian Competition,” premised on value creation, assumes great

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34 Andrew C. Revkin and John M. Broder, A Grudging Accord in Climate Talks, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 19, 2009. I will not go into full detail of the accord at Copenhagen, but it may be appropriate to mention that the climate talks did, at least in principle, end with several nations pledging to re-commit to their efforts toward binding agreements and new emission standards. Id.
35 This is true, notwithstanding the efforts of individual and national efforts to curb the effects of climate change.
37 Percival, supra note 30, at 1157.
39 The program was so successful that it reduced Sulfur Dioxide emissions from 16 million tons in 1990 to less than 11 million tons in 2002. http://www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=1085
40 I do not intend to downplay the importance of redistributing ownership rights for a healthy and, perhaps, a more equitable economy. Indeed, redistribution leading to better management of limited resources can have the effect of prolonging the life of those resources. However, the effectiveness of these economic solutions is outside the scope of this paper.
significance, for it allows us to fundamentally re-think how and why we brought these great tragedies upon ourselves.

IV. HUMANITARIAN COMPETITION

A. The Origin of Humanitarian Competition

The term “Humanitarian Competition” was coined by the original founder of Soka Education, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871 – 1944), in one of his best known works, The Geography of Human Life. In Geography, after describing in detail the historical and contemporaneous modes of national competition – which included military, political, and economic – Makiguchi predicted and envisioned a kind of competition that brought people together rather than divide them. Ikeda describes Makiguchi’s vision:

“[Makiguchi] 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. He envisaged a time when people and countries would compete – in the original sense of ‘seeking together’ – to make the greatest contribution to human happiness and well-being.”

A. “Seeking Together” and its relationship to “creation”

Here, we discover at least two major components of this Humanitarian Competition. First is the idea of “seeking together.” Makiguchi envisioned a world in which competition would be a shared cause for contributing to humankind. That idea is revolutionary. Strictly speaking, competition itself characterizes two or more actors acting independently against one another toward a common objective. Makiguchi rejects this traditional notion of competition and refashions it into a collective struggle. Moreover, he transforms competition into a dynamic action that necessitates consistent inquiry. This goes to the essence of Makiguchi’s educational philosophy and is the foundation of Soka Education. By seeking answers to problems together, Makiguchi sought to empower people to create their own understandings of the world, and in doing so, produce creative solutions. Accordingly, in his Geography of Human Life, instead of listing and plotting the traditional governmental units of Japan as was done in traditional Japanese textbooks, Makiguchi instead posed more fundamental questions that challenged people’s understanding of Geography:

“What is an island? What is a peninsula? What is the essential nature of these geographical functions? What problems and possibilities do they present to people living on them? By turning children’s attention to these questions, Makiguchi sought to empower learners to proactively adapt and shape their environment.”

Important here is Makiguchi’s idea of creating value together. That is, our understanding of the problems we face, which is derived from ongoing communal inquiry and experiences, shapes the reality by which we find solutions to those problems. This ceaseless hermeneutical exercise,

45 AN ANTHOLOGY OF TSUNESABURO MAKIGUCHI’S WORKS 40 (in Japanese) (Takehisa Tsuji ed., Daisan Bunmeisha 1994) (“If we encourage children to observe directly the complex relations between people and the land, between nature and society, they will grasp the realities of their homes, their school, the town, village or city, and will be able to understand the wider world”).
according to Makiguchi, gives us the wisdom to see beyond things simply as they are in and of themselves, but to dynamically reshape our relationship with those things and give them meaning. 46

B. “Making the Greatest Contribution to Society” and its relationship to “value”

The second major component of Makiguchi’s Humanitarian Competition is the goal of making the greatest contribution to society. This concept, just like the concept of “seeking together,” is at odds with traditional notions of competition. Competition is not thought of as an empathetic accord; instead, it is more accurately described as a manifestation of an individual desire for profit and gain. Makiguchi, however, in acknowledging the need for military, political, and economic stability, framed these modes of competition within a larger framework characterized by humanitarianism. 47 In contrast to these earlier modes of competition, however, Makiguchi envisioned that this Humanitarian Competition would be based on profound understanding of the interconnectivity and interdependence of humanity. 48

Central to this component is the Makiguchi’s idea of value. Makiguchi described value as “a quantitative expression of the relationship between [an] evaluating subject and [an] object of evaluation.” 49 Value can come in many different forms, namely moral, economic, and aesthetic, according to Makiguchi. 50 When we produce positive moral value, it is good; when economic value is realized, it is called a benefit; and, when aesthetic value is created, it is characterized as beautiful. Figure 3 below shows Makiguchi’s orientation of the three forms of value. Makiguchi oriented aesthetics as the lowest, but most recognizable form of value because it is “independent of any concerns for integrity in the total context of life.” 51 Beauty, in other words, is an exclusive realization of value. Makiguchi placed economic value higher than aesthetic value because it recognized the individual’s utilitarian desires within the context of a society. The highest level of value, however, is

46 This is not merely theoretical. Makiguchi’s approach, in fact, has been characterized as practical and scientific. E.g., Koichi Miyata, MAKIGUCHI TSUNESABURO HA KANTO WO KOETA KA [DID TSUNESABURO MAKIGUCHI GO BEYOND KANT?] (in Japanese) Daisan Bunmeisha 1997); Shoji Saito, WAKAKI MAKIGUCHI TSUNESABURO [THE YOUTHFUL TSUNESABURO MAKIGUCHI] (in Japanese) (Daisan Bunmeisha 1981). He wanted to ensure that the lessons his students created for themselves through their inquiry and experiences were pragmatic. Makiguchi therefore believed that the local community, where he believed the most ideal site for education was, was “a place where universal principles can be observed, confirmed, learned, and put into practice . . . . Makiguchi worked to ensure that, at the actual site of education, abstract concepts and learning would deeply and consciously linked to lived reality.” Andrew Gebert, The Role of Community Studies in Makiguchian Pedagogy, 45 EDUC. STUD. 146, 149 (2009).

47 Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, A GEOGRAPHY OF HUMAN LIFE 399 (Dayle Bethel trans., Caddo Gap) (2002) (“The methods of humanitarian competition are not, of course, simple or unitary; all other forms of competition – military, political, economic – must be conducted within a humanitarian framework. In other words, the objectives of states should not be merely the selfish pursuit of their own good but should be to enhance the lives of other peoples as well. We must choose those methods that profit ourselves while profiting others. We must learn to engage consciously in collective life”).

48 See generally Makiguchi, supra note 47.


50 Makiguchi, supra note 49, at 75 – 83.

51 Makiguchi, supra note 49, at 75.
moral value.\textsuperscript{52} Not only does it recognize the existence of a larger society, but moral value itself describes the forces that serve that society, as opposed to serving the individual.\textsuperscript{53}

![Figure 3: Makiguchi's orientation of values\textsuperscript{54}]

Clearly, Humanitarian Competition uses the language of the highest level of value, or morality. By “making the greatest contribution to society,” Makiguchi intended to describe the ‘good’ that was possible from “seeking together.” That ‘good’ represents a more profound view of value that goes beyond the self-enrichment that characterizes economics and well beyond Makiguchi’s understanding of beauty as a shallow realization of aesthetic value. These understandings of “seeking together” (or, creation) and “making the greatest contribution to society” (or, value) forms the foundation for Humanitarian Competition as a response to the Tragedies of the Commons and Anti-Commons.

V. HUMANITARIAN COMPETITION AS A RESPONSE TO THE TRAGEDIES OF THE COMMONS AND ANTI-COMMONS

A. Setting the stage for Humanitarian Competition

The Tragedy of the Commons and Anti-Commons are tragedies because of their limited conceptualizations. As I have mentioned before, the fundamental flaw in property that leads to these Tragedies are their basis in ownership. The linear spectrum with which we describe ownership schemes results in populations that own and populations that do not own. Therein lies the dilemma: Should an owner or potential owner of a particular resource act on his profit-maximizing economic instincts or yield to the necessities of the larger community? If he decides to act on his economics, he necessarily takes ownership rights away from others, and if taken to the extreme, creates destructive tragedies. In this situation, however, he profits immediately. If instead he decides to defer to the larger community, he may profit, but his profit is contingent upon the choices of the other communal owners.

This dilemma is not inevitable. Again, the common pool resource dilemma that underlies these Tragedies is only a dilemma in the realm of economics. Because we use the language of ownership to describe the sustainability and equality that we seek in these dilemmas, we are limited in our solutions to these problems. That is, when someone takes away from us, our rational economic response is to take away from them. This zero-sum game of economics constrains the

\textsuperscript{52} Makiguchi, \textit{supra} note 49, at 56.

\textsuperscript{53} Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, \textit{PHILOSOPHY OF VALUE} 13 (Soka Gakkai trans., Seikyo Press 1964) (“The value of good is the expression given to the evaluation of each individual’s voluntary action which contributes to the growth of a unified community . . .”).

\textsuperscript{54} Makiguchi, \textit{supra} note 49, at 75 (“We may . . . conveniently picture a hierarchical system of value as a pyramid with aesthetic values at the bottom and moral values on top”).
decisions we make as a community and disrespects the creative communal solutions that are possible.

With respect to the Makiguchi’s pyramid of values, we have reached the limits of what ‘benefits’ have to offer in the realm of economic value; we continue to pit desires for individual profit against conflicting desires for individual profit. The capacity of individualism to value create has reached its peak. What is necessary now is to resolve these Tragedies and disenchant the dilemma is a movement toward ‘good,’ which is a function of moral value. Humanitarian Competition, characterized by its emphasis on creating the highest level of value that is morality, is a mode of competition transcending the limits of this individualism.

B. The need for Humanitarian Competition

To reiterate, when perceived through the lens of morality, the highest form of value, the common pool resource dilemma underlying the Tragedies disappears. Humanitarian Competition, which is premised on the notion of creating societal ‘good’ instead of individualized ‘benefit,’ goes beyond the language of ownership as used in economics. Moreover, as I previously mentioned, Makiguchi believed that society could and would seek together to create this morality.

Confronting the Tragedies within this Makiguchian context requires re-thinking on two different levels that correspond to the two components of Humanitarian Competition. First, individuals must become cooperative organisms that have the capacity to and take the opportunity to “seek together” solutions to the Tragedies. This is the communal “creation” aspect of Soka Education, and it is not necessarily associated with a particular type of value. We can, for example, work together to create economic value that relieves of over using or under using a particular resource. This does not mean we can re-create resource itself, but create a separate form of economic value with respect to that resource. Makiguchi explains:

“Humans are powerless to create matter; we can create only value. All economists essentially concur in this, although their terminology may differ. Even if there is no direct admission of value creation, call it wealth or property or utility, human labor can at most bring forth new uses in existing natural materials by recombination, restructuring, or repositioning.”

This idea is easy enough to understand. In fact, it is a fundamental understanding shared by economists. For example, when the price of oil sky-rocketed, car companies responded by investing in fuel efficiency research and developing cars with higher MPG ratings so as to lower consumer dependency on gas. As a result, however, the value of fuel efficient cars increased. The Tragedy of Commons of gas depletion was effectively deterred, at least for the time being. Taken in this way, avoiding the could be as easy (or hard, depending on the way you look at it) as developing new technology, new markets, and new rules that more effectively and efficiently consume our

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55 Makiguchi, supra note 49, at 77.
56 E.g. Harold Demsetz, Toward a Theory of Property Rights, 168 SCIENCE 1243 (1968) (proposing that when high transaction costs encourage a particular person to internalize the externalities of his actions (or the consequences and benefits that he is not forced to take into account when confronted with a decision because they do not affect him individually) with regards to his uses of a particular resource, they are more compelled to seek out different uses for the resource).
57 Notice how this value creation is still in the realm of economic value. The ‘benefit’ of profit was simply transferred from the gas companies to fuel-efficient car manufacturers. Put simply, the Toyota profited at the expense of Exxon.
resources. In this way, our desires shift to these new utilities and resources take on different levels of [economic] value.

But to say that working together to create economic value is easy is misleading. Even if we understand that certain individual economically motivated actions are detrimental to larger society, we may still engage in that economically rationale behavior at the expense of others. For example, many people believe in environmental protection in principle, but they continue to buy gas-chugging SUVs absent even economic reason, advancing the possibility of a Tragedy of the gas Commons. Or, even more prevalent is our tendency to defer to courts of law, which bring resolution but widen the gap of non-cooperation. By increasingly deferring the courts, we have effectively shown our propensity toward challenging one another rather than seeking together. A true “seeking together” is still missing; there is still a want for a genuine Humanitarian Competition that promotes a cooperative creation of value.

The notion that we can go beyond economic value and learn to adopt morality as a communal endeavor toward “making the greatest contribution to society” requires another level of re-conceptualization. This is perhaps the more difficult endeavor toward Humanitarian Competition. In the pyramid of value, economic value creation is inferior to moral value creation. Yet today we continue to become victims of the Tragedies that are rooted in the fundamentally economic desire of individual profit maximization. Because we continue to view solutions to these economic problems to lie on the same spectrum of ownership, of have and have-nots, we limit our ability to produce creative solutions. We fail to go beyond the borders of selfishness and seek a greater level of societal consciousness that values the larger community as an interconnected and interdependent organism.

When taken as a response to the Tragedies, the idea of a Humanitarian Competition is revolutionary. The ultimate tragedies of overuse and underuse can be resolved if we are consistently seeking to create moral value. In fact, overuse and underuse are not even dysfunctions of the highest concern when we are traversing the realm of morality. When we perceive these economically problematic situations in the light of society-centered morality, they respect attention to the extent that society as a whole is being affected. To be sure, this has nothing to do with the status of the individual, but how morally valuable it is for the sake of society, of which the individual is a part.

C. Value-creating education as a basis for Humanitarian Competition

58 The language of ownership that characterizes economic value is very obvious here. In the realm of economic value, we “avoid” the tragedies because we simply move from one form of benefit to another form of individual benefit.
59 Makiguchi, supra note 49, at 77 (“Desires and property gravitate to one another, either or both inevitably adapting so as to maximize their mutual relevance. Such changes naturally alter or remake the utility in accordance with the new desire-property correlation. As wants grow more intense, the utility of the desired property increases, and as the desire wanes, the utility decreases proportionally”).
60 Makiguchi, supra note 49, at 79 (“Law regulates the minimum level of morality. It does not ask people outright to do good; it just punishes them for doing wrong. Technically, the courts are not empowered to interfere with the affairs of those who do not do positive good . . . . Judiciary administrations do not exist to promote good but are meant only as punitive afterthoughts.”)
61 But Humanitarian Competition does not mean that individuals must neglect economic and aesthetic values. As I previously mentioned, within a Humanitarian Competition, economic and aesthetic values are valued in the context of the larger humanitarian (societal) framework. Makiguchi, supra note 48.
62 In fact, “status” most often denotes an economic quality about a person. In a moral society, however, economics are not as consequential as ‘good.’
Admittedly, the entire concept of morality is hard to grasp, primarily because we seldom experience it; our economic instincts repel us from genuine understanding of morality. It is, for example, extremely difficult for us to understand why a nation might impose severe limitations of its emissions of greenhouse gases simply for the health of the entire world. Therefore the true question with regards for the need for Humanitarian Competition is how we fulfill that need. The answer is education.

Learning to ‘seek together’ and to create ‘moral’ value does not come instinctively, but so much so because we have been trained to value things economically. In the same way, however, we can be trained to value things on a higher level. According to Makiguchi:

“The task of creating economic benefit or aesthetic beauty from inanimate resources can proceed directly from the choice of materials to the respective formative processes, but when the value we seek to create is moral good from human resources, we must first cultivate those resources. This consists of arousing an awareness of the collective life of society in each and every individual, because the degree to which people themselves take responsibility to work toward the common good and social betterment ultimately makes the difference.”

In other words, Makiguchi realized that a truly moral society must start with fostering individuals with a social consciousness. In order for a true Humanitarian Competition to be realized, the individuals who participate must have the capacity to look beyond their immediate self and toward the betterment of society. This kind of capacity-building is, according to Makiguchi, the responsibility of education. Education is the only thing capable of developing a larger social consciousness because it is a continuous endeavor. Moreover, Makiguchi believed that a communal education that encouraged interaction with others and with the environment was the only kind that could develop an understanding for the larger world and a sense of purpose to contribute to society. Hence, “as we look to the future, it is education that must provide the necessary guidance. Now more than ever before, all levels of society . . . must recognize the value of learning in overcoming the illusions of self-important individualism.”

A. CONCLUSION

What’s needed now to overcome the Tragedies of the Commons and Anti-Commons is a paradigmatic shift in our values. The Tragedies are rooted in a common pool resource dilemma that is characterized by a difficult decision of whether to prioritize self-profit or societal gain. However, this dilemma is only a dilemma because the language of economics forces us to make resource distribution a zero-sum game. Individual profit is pitted against societal gain, and is seen as two discrepant forces along a linear spectrum of ownership. That is, the more I have, the less others have. The economically rationale profitable action is, therefore, to own more for oneself, even if that results in overuse and underuse of shared resources.

On the other hand, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s theory of Humanitarian Competition allows us to transcend economic disparities and view the decisions we make as a society as a moral concern. In this higher realm of value that is morality, individuals identify themselves as a part of a larger societal organism and seek to create value in that context. By re-conceptualizing our understandings

64 Makiguchi, supra note 46.
65 Makiguchi, supra note 49, at 85-86.
and solutions to property dilemmas in this way, the Social Justice concern of sustainable resource use becomes a function of moral value creation; advancing Social Justice becomes contingent on an education that promotes the collective creation of value. As Michael Strand so eloquently describes, Makiguchi’s philosophy of Humanitarian Competition warrants serious consideration as an approach to resolving the fundamental attitudes that cause tragedies:

“In the 21st century, new dilemmas such as global climate change and shortages of oil and water will affect every country on earth, forcing the human organism to fundamentally change how it lives. War, enmity, and economic strife will only work to further divide humanity, and circumscribe our ability to survive as a society. We no longer can afford to educate our children simply to accept the world ‘as it is’. Rather, we must educate our children to dream of the world ‘as it could be’, and inspire their creative will to construct values which will manifest as a more just, equitable, and sustainable society.”

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Music Education:  
Social Justice through Creativity and Inclusion

Elaine Chang Sandoval

Class of 2011

Introduction: Needing to Establish a Goal for Education

At the foundation of human nature is the need to establish ourselves and assert a sense of being through establishing an objective for ourselves, a sense of mission. After all, how many of us, come the end of every December, would dare cross into a new year without a set of determinations in hand? Establishing goals and feeling like we have a reason for our existence and something to accomplish each day is what motivates us and empowers us. Human institutions, such as educational institutions, would presumably also benefit from being able to proceed with a clearer sense of direction. However, as we begin this second decade of the 21st Century, most Americans could examine their current societal institutions only to conclude that the accessible and prevalent system of education responsible for the majority of American youth has only a disjointed sense of mission, if any at all. We wonder why youth have little interest in learning, why drop-out rates continue to rise, why it is so hard to get students to focus during class. Yet the majority of schools today provide no strong sense of why education is important or what the mission of education actually is; in fact, education in most schools functions counter to our human need to have an end goal in mind when setting out on a new journey or taking on a new challenge. Of course, we try to
encourage students by appealing to their immediate interests, saying that school is a place to make friends, to get a GPA with which to enter college, to hone leadership skills in clubs, or to learn a vocation, but such reasoning borders on superficiality. It isn’t enough. What is the overall mission of the institution of education itself? Is it just to supply children with facts of life and nature, and ensure that they recall it well enough to regurgitate when quizzed? Is it to expand their vocabularies so that they can find respectable careers and gain status in this world? Is it to give them opportunities to discover their personal passions? To some extent, the answer to all of these questions is yes, and when teachers and parents, and/or even a self-directed student, possess the conviction that these values in education are worth striving for, it is enough to get them through that education happily. But I believe that without a deeper meditation about the mission of education, without defining a mission that appeals to humankind as a whole, there will always be those students who can’t find meaning in their education and begrudge attending class. Such students have a limited chance of embracing and taking advantage of what education is offered to them, and thus also have slight opportunity of living a fulfilling life or coexisting happily with others in their society.

The Current State of Music Education

Music education, as a branch of education, is currently also troubled by a lack of mission. The first music classes in the United States came about thanks to the Puritan pilgrims, who wanted to remedy the issue of no longer being able to sing in tune during church services, in turn dishonoring their religious practice. Since then, proponents for music education utilize arguments for promoting music education such as the need to alleviate a societal lack of culture, music’s possibilities in raising children’s intelligence, and the necessity of providing an activity that keeps kids occupied and off the streets, reasons which are again all relatively superficial. Without a more rooted motivation for continuing to teach music and a theory based on such a foundation, music educators are unable to hold their ground when advocating the necessity of music education, and suffer from this desperation, especially in the face of governmental budget cuts in education. Music teachers love their art for a reason, and believe wholeheartedly in sharing it with as many future generations as possible through providing education. But just as the concept of music, in its transience and intangibility, is so hard to put into words, making arguments for music education poses a similar elusiveness. How, then, can music educators convince schools and society that they deserve to be teaching? How can they motivate themselves to keep teaching, day after day? How can they encourage their students to invest their time and energy studying music? And more importantly, what musical goals can they provide for their students?

I myself began to teach private lessons at the quite inexperienced age of fourteen, and although I was enjoying my role as a music teacher, by the time I was graduating from high school, I realized that I was frustrated with not being able to attach a theoretical backbone to my teaching and with not being able to logically uphold a credible reason for why I should continue. I found music enjoyable and knew that it had transformed my life both in my daily practices and my ideals, and from observing my students, peers, and friends similarly changed through their practice of music, I sincerely wanted to share these transformative powers of music with as many people as I could. It felt right to me that I should pursue teaching, and intuitively, I knew that music and music education were

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fundamentally important to humankind. At the same time, I watched multiple colleagues in music fall into the habit of practicing and making music solely for the sake of competition, something which felt inherently wrong to me. Such musicians were actually using music to create tension between them and others, and to raise their status by making names for themselves, I felt that music, as something of beauty, is meant to help the individual become happy, and in turn serve as a means of sharing that joy with others. I felt it was time that I begin to develop a more critical appraisal with which to continuously serve as a proponent of music education.

Why Music?

After having opportunities to deeply consider both music and education from a variety of different perspectives during my undergraduate liberal arts schooling at Soka University of America, I started to gradually develop answers to that question I constantly asked myself: “Why music?” In my search to establish music’s importance to the human experience and in turn why music education is essential to human life, I pieced together statements from the various disciplines I studied. In studying the philosophy of aesthetics and attempting to define beauty and its value to mankind, I concluded that music had a definitive role in helping one to understand and appreciate beauty. In studying world music and seeking to grasp the relationship between various societies and their music-making, I realized that through understanding music as a universal habit, one could better comprehend and respect other cultures and peoples and their art forms. In studying the nature of creativity, I inferred that music, as an art, lets one expand and demonstrate one’s creative capacities, opening opportunities for a sense of achievement. As a member of various bands and orchestras, I felt that making music with others was one of the most gratifying and joyful forms of human experience, and I decided that ensemble playing had the potential for peacefully uniting people. In my studies of culturally heterogeneous Latin American music, I saw music being used to create a sense of ethnic identity, and determined that music could be used as a tool for social movements. Examining the music cultures of countries across Africa demonstrated to me that music provided one with a spiritual connection and understanding of one’s ancestors, that music in its capacity as an oral tradition is important to establishing one’s identity as a member of a group. In studying the history and development of jazz, it appeared that music in its improvisatory nature had the capability of letting one explore one’s individuality.

Thus, music has clout as a universal habit because it holds such great status in our many and varied aspects of life, and supports us in establishing a sense of self. I realized that there was something in common at the foundation of all those statements: that music making and music listening enables one to both reach and share the highest levels of human and self understanding. Music educator Bennett Reimer, author of *A Philosophy of Music Education*, succinctly states in his passage on the importance of the arts and aesthetics,

> There is no more powerful way for humans to explore, embody and share their sense of the significance of human life than through the making and experiencing of art. When the act of creation has taken the artist deep into the nature of human existence; when the perceiver similarly but individually shares the sense of human condition embodied in the art work; both creator and perceiver have been carried below the surface difference
and divisions of daily life to a point where the common humanity of people can be glimpsed and felt.  

It is because of music’s immense power over self-understanding, over human understanding, that it is so significant to mankind. Without the platform of art to establish such an understanding, how else could one comprehend the nature of one’s life and one’s relationships with others? How could one activate one’s potential to create? Many intellectuals seek to define this need for self-understanding, as Reimer summarizes in the following point:

If it is true that experiences of art yield insights into human subjective reality, the arts may be conceived as a means to self-understanding, a way by which a human’s sense of his nature can be explored, clarified, grasped. Many words have been used to describe the value of insight into one’s nature as a responsive organism: “self-unification” (John Dewey); “personal identity” (Susanne K. Langer); “individualization” (Leonard B. Meyer); “individuation” (Carl G. Jung); “self-actualization” (Abraham H. Maslow); “integration of the personality” (Paul Tillich). All these terms signify the humanizing value of self-knowledge. There are few deeper values than this. And the arts are one the most effective means known to man to realize this value.

From its role as defined in subjects from aesthetics to cultural exchange, music is important to humanity because it allows the individual this chance at “self-actualization”, opening paths to creativity and providing a medium for promoting positive relationships between humans. And, the fact that music does not discriminate in giving such opportunities means that it can potentially give each of us the chance to share in the human experience through our innate creativity, in turn giving us a sense of belonging and inclusion in our communities.

*Why Music Education?*

Being able to define the importance of music encourages one to better delineate the importance of music education. Because playing music allows one to develop creatively, giving one a sense of happiness from one’s achievements and one’s own ability to create value, it is an estimable ambition that all people are given the opportunities to learn music. Furthermore, because studying music can provide one with a sense of inclusion, both within one’s immediate society and within the human race at large, it is an emotionally powerful tool to counteract current problems of societal stratification. The father of aesthetic education, Friedrich von Schiller, states in his book *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,*

All other forms of communication divide society, because they relate exclusively either to the private receptivity or to the private proficiency of its individual members, hence to that which distinguishes man from man; only the aesthetic mode of communication unites society, because it relates to that which is common to all… Beauty alone do we enjoy at once as individual and

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3 Ibid. 26
as fetus, i.e., as representatives of the human genus... Beauty alone makes the whole world happy, and each and every being forgets its limitation while under its spell.  

This is what I would deem to be social justice, a world in which all humans have access to opportunities in which they can gain their own individual measure of happiness and are empowered to contribute positively to their societies, overcoming their personal sense of limitation. The true spirit and purpose of education should be to enable people to achieve such ends. This is accomplished through the development and liberation of our creative capacities and through attaining reassurance of a sense of inclusion in being human, both of which are supported through the institution of music education.

Defining Social Justice

Today, a variety of definitions for social justice are in popular use. The Social Work Dictionary defines social justice as

An ideal condition in which all members of a society have the same basic rights, protections, opportunities, obligations, and social benefits. Implicit in this concept is the notion that historical inequalities should be acknowledged and remedied through specific measures... social justice entails advocacy to confront discrimination, oppression, and institutional inequities.

The International Forum for Social Development elaborates on the history of the concept of social justice, stating that,

The concept of social justice emerged as an expression of protest against what was perceived as the capitalist exploitation of labour and as a focal point for the development of measures to improve the human condition. It was born as a revolutionary slogan embodying the ideals of progress and fraternity.

Perhaps the most prominent contemporary thinker on social justice is John Rawls, author of A Theory of Justice. He begins this book by establishing his concept of justice as fairness. Rawls approaches this idea through his conception of a hypothetical original position which he defines as follows,

Among the essential features of this situation is that no one knows his place in society his class position or social status, nor does any one know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence,

strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances.7

While this idea of a veil of ignorance, of returning to the conscious state (or lack thereof) that we all have while in the womb, can only ever be hypothetical, he posits that a consideration of the veil of ignorance helps us to imagine and visualize an ideal just society, facilitating the making of more just decisions in how we treat others. Rawls' intention is that social justice comes from appreciating the humanity common to each of us through ignoring such worldly traits as status and ability. I believe that this runs parallel to my idea of social justice that is built on a sense of inclusion.

I would say that the “evils” of our world – poverty, hunger, warfare, racism – are considered as such because they each impede upon our human pursuit for social justice as defined above. They are barriers to those ideals of creativity and inclusion that are at the core of social justice. Creativity and inclusion are the goals that social justice is seeking to achieve – the equal opportunities for all people to open their creative capacities and create value, and the equal chance at feeling totally included as a contributive member of one’s society. Education and music education, then, have vast possibilities in contributing to social justice.

Soka Education

These concepts – that creativity allows one to find happiness and that a sense of inclusion is found in being able to contribute to one’s society – is in fact the core of the father of Soka Education, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s, beliefs on education and value creation. In his fundamental book, aptly entitled Education for Creative Living, Makiguchi, characterizes the purpose of education by stating,

Human life is a process of creating value, and education should guide us toward that end...Human dignity arises from value creation. One scholar has gone so far as to proclaim that the creation of value is the highest form of human activity...To live to the full realization of one’s potential is to attain and actualize values. Helping us learn to live as creators of value is the purpose of education. 8

and

…the purpose of education is to enable children to become responsible, healthy cells in the social organism, to contribute to the happiness of society, and, by doing so, to find meaning, purpose, and happiness in their own individual lives.9

9 Ibid. 21-22.
Makiguchi believes that the mission of education is two-fold. On the individual level, it is to enable students to create value and become happy, and then in turn to contribute to the positive growth of society. When discussing the concept of “creating value”, Makiguchi is very clear in defining his terms. Value is classified into three levels: beauty (aesthetic value), benefit (personal profit), and good (societal benefit). I believe that music inherently creates all three of these classifications of value. The musician is of course creating something of aesthetic beauty, which contributes to his personal benefit in gaining happiness from that achievement, and the enjoyment of whoever is fortunate enough to play audience to that music can be considered to be the good. Bennett Reimer actually categorizes the values of music education along the same lines. He states:

Music education has a dual obligation to society. The first is to develop the talents of those who are gifted musically... The second obligation is to develop the aesthetic sensitivity to music of all people regardless of their individual levels of musical talent, for their own personal benefit, for the benefit of society which needs an active cultural life, for the benefit of the art of music which depends on a continuing supply of sympathetic, sensitive consumers.¹⁰

When music education can be rooted in its goals in a strong philosophy of value creation, it will naturally adopt the mission of striving for social justice. It will fulfill its obligation to society in cultivating the creative talents of the individual, in allowing the individual to share their expression for the sake of happiness of both self and other, and in uniting humanity in the shared experience of the universal habit of music. I believe that the marriage of Soka pedagogy and the institution of music education can play a key role in achieving social justice in this world.

_A Modern Example: Venezuela’s El Sistema_

One tremendous example of social justice being achieved through music education is that of El Sistema in Venezuela. In 1975, musician and economist Dr. Jose Antonio Abreu, an educator of a foresight and passion comparable to Makiguchi’s or Ikeda’s, came up with a revolutionary idea for music education. Troubled by the poverty confronting Venezuelan society, the crime rates amongst urban youth, and the lack of access to classical music in his country, he combined his passions and decided to open up a system of children’s and youth orchestras, offering free access to music education to as many young people as possible. He named this La Fundación del Estado para el Sistema Nacional de las Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela (State Foundation for the National System of Youth and Children’s Orchestras, FESNOJIV), or more casually, _El Sistema_ (in Spanish, literally “the system”). After a modest beginning by a group of dedicated Venezuelan music educators, El Sistema today is world-renowned both for its effects on Venezuelan societal problems, which offers an example of what other countries can achieve, and for the artistic caliber of its young musicians. At least one El Sistema orchestra school exists in each state of Venezuela, and the program currently serves approximately 250,000 young students, 90% of which are from

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poor socio-economic backgrounds;\(^{11}\) since its start, an estimated 2 million children have learned music through Abreu’s program.\(^{12}\) Abreu explicitly states that his primary purpose in establishing El Sistema was to contribute to the accomplishment of social justice:

To my mind, our social problems all stem from a sense of exclusion. If you look at the world, you see that exclusion in some form or other is to blame for the explosion of social problems everywhere. So we have to fight to bring as many people as we can, everyone, if possible, into our wonderful world: the world of music, the world of the orchestra, of singing, of art.\(^{13}\)

Material poverty shall be conquered by musical richness. Social justice and cultural justice are aspects of one dimension.\(^{14}\)

Music attacks material poverty because it transforms the whole child. This transformation makes the child special, rich. As the child’s mind improves, his aspirations, his ideas also change. He is no longer a poor child. The material poverty is overcome.\(^{15}\)

This belief, that social justice can be achieved more completely by strengthening the spirit of happiness than by overcoming poverty, is in exact accordance with the pedagogy of Soka Education. Ikeda clarifies Makiguchi’s words by stating,

…Makiguchi endeavored, by means of education and religious faith, to foster people who could create their own happiness, human beings who could create value. There is no other way to bring happiness to the human race. The concept of value creation (soka) formulated by Mr. Makiguchi focuses on the values of beauty, benefit, and good. These are just alternative names for happiness. Although it is possible to inherit property, it is impossible to inherit happiness. We could replace the word \textit{property} with \textit{rank} or \textit{knowledge} and the same would hold true.\(^{16}\)

\textit{Music Education in the Orchestra Ensemble}

Abreu’s particularly revolutionary belief is that music education should occur primarily in the environment of an orchestra. The orchestra can be said to function as a microcosm of the ideal socially just society. Within an orchestra, even one comprised of hundreds of members, each player is absolutely crucial. It is the nature of sound that even a slight imbalance or minor mistake on the part of one person will hinder the overall beauty of a performance. At the same time, each member must always play a supportive role to each other, paying focused attention and listening carefully and respectfully to all the other


\(^{13}\) Smaczny, Paul, and Maria Stodtmeier, dir. \textit{El Sistema: Music to Change Life}. 2008. DVD-ROM.


musicians. In this sense, each musician, while having different responsibilities, is treated as an equal, appreciated for their unique contribution to the group. The orchestra also requires the unification of each individual in fighting for a common goal of beauty and creating value. This is what makes ensemble music learning such a powerful experience. Abreu states,

> In its essence, the orchestra and the choir are much more than artistic structures: they are examples and schools of social life, because to sing and to play together, means to intimately coexist toward perfection and excellence following a strict discipline of organization and coordination in order to seek the harmonic interdependence of voices and instruments. That’s how they build a spirit of solidarity and fraternity among them, develop their self-esteem and foster the ethical and aesthetical values related to the music in all its sense. This is why music is immensely important in the awakening of sensibility, in the forging of values and in the training of youngsters to teach other kids.17

El Sistema’s educational principles have many other aspects particularly designed to serve social justice. Abreu took into consideration that students can only learn if the basic human needs of safety, food, and shelter are taken into consideration. Documentary footage shows that all of El Sistema’s centers are well-guarded and protected from the crime of the city. Wary of instruments being stolen from students in transit between music class and home, some centers allow students to keep one instrument at school and one at home, or provide space and time for students to practice at school. In addition, several centers have dormitories for students without good living conditions at home.

Another unique aspect of El Sistema is the teacher-student relationship. While there are a good amount of hired professionals that serve as teachers, they also rely on their own students. As soon as a student reaches a level of musical experience, they are expected to turn around and help teach those students less experienced than they are. While of course this alleviates the need for well-trained music teachers that might be hard to afford and hard to come by, it is important primarily because it gives the students both a sense of empowerment and responsibility towards their peers. It teaches those younger (or less experienced) students to respect someone as a teacher based on their experience, not on their qualifications. And it shows the older students what a great influence they can play in the lives of their friends and classmates and how great the results of their teaching can be.

Abreu and his educators also took into account the needs of students with different needs and interests. El Sistema has a choir for deaf children (they create their art primarily with hand movements) and also a program for those of mental and other physical handicaps. In addition, students who aren’t necessarily interested in music have other capacities of participation. El Sistema currently has programs to train students both in the craft of instrument building and multi-media documentation. This fulfills the need for the huge amount of instruments needed to supply so many students and also El Sistema’s need to document their history and achievements. More importantly, it appeals to those students that would have fallen through the cracks of the normal education system, for lack of resources or lack of interest. This illustrates clearly that Abreu and El Sistema function first and foremost for the sake of society; while it is a program of music education, music is not the ends, but the means towards achieving social justice. El Sistema in its own way is helping to

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establish a “veil of ignorance” for these students, placing them as equals within the orchestra and working to provide them with a music education that functions despite status, background, interest, and ability.

Something has to be right in Abreu’s thinking, because the advent of El Sistema has made drastic changes in society, seen both statistically, and more importantly, as is evidenced in the stories of many individual children. At least three films documenting the effects of El Sistema have been produced in just the past three years, and each includes many touching interviews of young students who would not have had any access to music education were it not for El Sistema. Such anecdotes are proof that receiving music education is transforming a student’s life. One example is this:

Lennar Acosta, now a clarinetist in the Caracas Youth Orchestra and a tutor at the Simón Bolívar Conservatory, had been arrested nine times for armed robbery and drug offences before the sistema offered him a clarinet. ‘At first, I thought they were joking,” he recalls. ‘I thought nobody would trust a kid like me not to steal an instrument like that. But then I realized that they were not lending it to me. They were giving it to me. And it felt much better in my hands than a gun.18

El Sistema has recently gained huge amounts of attention around the world (in part due to the success of its alumni, including Gustavo Dudamel, who at the age of twenty-seven was recently hired for the prestigious position of conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and pianist Gabriela Montero, who played at Barack Obama’s inauguration). In fact, El Sistema-inspired programs have begun to spring up across the world, from Scotland to Mexico to Los Angeles, and a fellowship program specifically designed to train future music educators in its pedagogies opened just this past year at The New England Conservatory. Its founder, Dr. Jose Antonio Abreu, has also been receiving various awards for his humanitarian work, giving El Sistema lots of press and a following of supporters. It is important to remember, though, that the deepest and most significant proof of El Sistema’s dynamism is in the fact that it is a living, breathing example of music education contributing to social justice.

Conclusion

Confronting the various ailments of today’s world and striving to achieve social justice in our communities can be daunting and overwhelming. At the same time though, such struggles only reinforce the power that education has in gradually working to achieve social justice, student by student. When one examines the concepts of music and music education, it becomes more and more apparent the impact that music education can have in accomplishing social justice. As evidenced by such theories as the philosophies of aesthetic education and Soka Education, and by current practices such as the compelling El Sistema in Venezuela, music education is an important path in attaining social justice in our world. Especially in ensembles such as the orchestra, music education can both help the individual unlock their creative capacities in order to create value and attain happiness, and also

promote one’s contribution to others and an inclusion in the human experience. These two facets of creativity and inclusion are in fact what set music education apart as an ideal site to nurture social justice. Music is perhaps one of the most human of creations, and the humanism that is encouraged and blossoms with music education will invariably lead us to herald in an age in which all humans have the means to become happy and coexist in a socially just world. It is my fervent hope to use Soka Education and music education to prove Bennett Reimer’s statement that, “If education is to be humanistic in its effects it can be so more effectively through art than through any other means.”

References:


Advancing the Educational Experience of the Learner: SUA Residential Life’s Co-Curricular Approach

Ruby Nagashima

The experiences students bring to the classroom play a paramount role in their education. They serve as the springboard for how the students understand their current realities and how they make meaning of what they learn in class. A student who grew up hearing first-hand the heart wrenching experiences of the holocaust from a grandparent will read *Night* by Eli Wiesel very differently in contrast to a student who did not grow up hearing those stories. The experience of the learner cannot be ignored in education. Equally important is the educator’s willingness to incorporate the experience of the student to facilitate learning.

This paper consists of two main parts. The first explores pragmatist and educational reformer John Dewey’s idea on “traditional” versus ”progressive” education, the importance of the learner’s experience in education and the educator’s role in facilitating learning. Subsequently, I parallel Dewey to revolutionary educator Paulo Freire. I explore Freire’s thoughts on the “banking” concept of education, how crucial his concepts of “unfinishedness” and “epistemological curiosity” are to the learner in relation to their experience and the educator’s role to awaken in the learner a call
for action to overturn unjust structures. Finally, I draw parallels between Dewey, Freire and humanistic and student centered educator Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. I investigate Makiguchi’s concepts of “purpose in education” and the learner’s “happiness” in relation to their community, the educational roles of the “school, home and community” and how Soka Education is by definition a call for social justice. Both Freire and Makiguchi urge the learner to use their quest for knowledge and experiences as catalysts to uphold social justice.

The latter part of this paper will explore Soka University of America’s (SUA) current curriculum, which includes both the academic and student development foci, in relation to the importance of the learner’s experience. Following that, Residential Life’s Co-Curricular model, a component of which requires active service or volunteerism, is introduced. It is my assertion that the experiences gained engaging in community service or volunteering brings invaluable insight into the materials taught in class. By students actively engaged in service in their communities and relating the experiences back into the classrooms, I affirm that this aspect of the Co-curricular Model reflects Makiguchi’s desire for the community to be an integral part of the learner’s education.

Part I:
John Dewey

Progressive educator, John Dewey (1938) discusses how we as humanity tend to understand the world in terms of polar opposites and that education too has two opposing schools of thought, traditional and progressive. Dewey explains how traditional views of education lean toward the idea that knowledge deemed important has been decided by those of the past and therefore the purpose of schools are to transmit knowledge. Since “knowledge” in this case is handed down, student’s attitude and conduct in the classroom must be “one of docility, receptivity, and obedience.” (p.18) The knowledge transferred is inert and unchanging and is conveyed as a “finished product” rather than something constantly changing and in flux. Many of us have experienced this type of traditional education at some point in our educational career. Take for example a history lesson on the atomic bomb. Depending on which nation is preparing the lesson, Japan or the United States, the facts and knowledge transferred will greatly differ. The history lesson that a young Japanese girl from Nagasaki learns from an elderly teacher who survived World War II will differ greatly in contrast to a young American girl who learns about the war from a textbook published in the US. While both girls will learn about the history lesson as unchanging fact, there are nuances and experiences that they both have yet to come across that can greatly alter both of their perspectives.

According to Dewey (1938), progressive education emerges as a direct opposition to the notion of traditional education. Rather than force fed knowledge, it encourages individual thought; instead of learning from textbooks and teachers, it promotes learning through experience and rather than fixed knowledge, it urges us to understand the world as one that is constantly in flux. A hallmark of progressive education is how it values and uses the experiences the student brings to the classroom to facilitate further learning. Dewey (1938) states that it is the responsibility of the educator to ensure two things, “first, that the problem grows out of the conditions of the experience being had in the present…and secondly, that it is such that it arouses in the learner an active quest for information and for production of new ideas. The new facts and new ideas thus obtained become the ground for further experiences in which new problems are presented”. (p.79) Dewey asserts that it is crucial for the learner’s existing experiences to build on the learning taking place in the classroom. And further, that this connection between experience and new insight should present further pursuit and curiosity on the subject. This interplay between experience and knowledge build on each other, continuously leading the learner on a quest for further insight and learning.
Thinking back to significant moments in your education, personal epiphanies if you will, how did that process occur? Was it through the remote transfer of knowledge in the form of a textbook or a moment of reflection after an intense experience or discussion with a friend? In what moments does real learning take place? During my undergraduate education, I was required to study a foreign language. I studied Spanish for two years through textbooks and the memorization of rules. And during those two years, I was absolutely terrible with the acquisition of Spanish. There were moments when I felt completely inadequate and helpless. However, when I traveled to Ecuador for my study abroad, I acquired the skills and ability to speak Spanish within 5 short months. Suddenly, the pain and loathing I had experienced and felt toward Spanish became unimaginable. I enjoyed every second of my experience speaking Spanish. In my case, it was the experience of speaking Spanish combined with the years of memorization that was necessary for truly learning and acquiring the language.

Dewey (1938) warns however that not all experiences are necessarily educative. He states “experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other” (p.25). When one’s experiences thwart the further quest for knowledge and experience, it becomes mis-educative. Dewey clarifies that traditional education is not empty of experience, however it is the quality of those experiences that render whether the student desires or avoids consecutive experiences. Therefore, the central task of the educator is to facilitate or offer the kind of experiences that will engage and create opportunities for succeeding ones.

Dewey writes “Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into”. (p.38) Therefore, the educator must be able to see the direction in which a particular experience is heading and facilitate the experience toward one of value and further growth. Dewey recognizes that students come with experiences from various homes and environments and therefore strongly believes that educators “should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building experiences that are worthwhile.” (p.40) The ability of the educator to facilitate the learning that occurs based on the student’s experiences is not only imperative but necessary. Both educator and learner have the opportunity to learn from one another. While the student develops their understanding of a certain subject from an educator, the educator too, through the interaction with students and the experiences they have had, develops in even greater depth and understanding of what he or she teaches.

Paulo Freire

Just as Dewey criticizes traditional education when it serves to be mis-educative, Freire too rejects education that is authoritative and imposed, where the objective of the educator is to “fill” the learner with information. Freire explains the concept of the “banking system” where the teacher deposits information into the students who serve as the recipients. Instead of teaching, the student only receives, memorizes and repeats what is taught and the only form of communication is one-directional. Freire (1970) states, “in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing.” (p. 72) The banking concept of education is a form of education that imposes, without leeway for disagreement, what predecessors have deemed valuable. Rather than this enforced form of education, Freire encourages the production or construction of knowledge by the learner themselves. He affirms that the ability for the learner to do this is greatly fueled by the awareness of their “unfinishedness” and “epistemological curiosity”.

It is Freire’s (1998) firm conviction that the world is not pre-determined, but rather the contrary, that it is unfinished and constantly capable and ready for change. Freire states that we as
human beings are all unfinished. Moreover, by virtue of being unfinished we have a right and obligation to continuously develop and evolve. We have the capacity to insert ourselves into our realities to change it. He states, “the progressive task is thus to encourage and make possible, in the most diverse circumstances, the ability to intervene in the world—never its opposite, the crossing of arms before challenges.” (p. 38) Freire strongly condemns the fatalist determinism that renders an individual hopeless and asserts that if the human condition is one of essential unfinishedness, then it must be that we are beings intended to learn and seek completeness.

Freire denounces the kind of discourse that accepts the impossibility of changing the world, where the status quo has been accepted. To settle for the status quo, despite being aware of its unjust foundation, is the greatest expression of defeat in the struggle for change. Freire declares that “the ability to resist is lacking or weak in those who settle for what is. It is easier for anyone who has given up on resisting, or for whom resisting wasn’t ever possible, to cozy up to the tepidness of impossibility, rather than to embrace the permanent and almost always uneven struggle for justice and ethics.” (p.16) When we recognize our unfinishedness and the unfinishedness of society, when we see clearly the oppressive structures that maintain the status quo and exist to marginalize and suppress, it invariably requires action. Ultimately, Freire elucidates that we as unfinished beings have a choice to live as agents of change, to struggle unconditionally for what is right and to put forth effort to end such systems of repression or simply not.

The more one recognizes their unfinishedness and exercises their thirst for successive knowledge, the greater the opportunity for the individual to develop what Freire calls, “epistemological curiosity”. According to Freire (1998), epistemological curiosity is the pure quest for knowledge combined with the capacity to be critical both of self and others. While simple experience or observation is not necessarily methodologically sound, Freire asserts that there is a certain type of knowledge one gains through pure curiosity or common sense; it is knowledge pulled out from experience and an educator must ensure to respect and facilitate that knowledge.

In fact, Freire (1998) states “the more my own practice as a teacher increases in methodological rigor, the more respect I must have for the ingenuous knowledge of the student. For this ingenuous knowledge is the starting point from which his/her epistemological curiosity will work to produce a more critically scientific knowledge.” (p. 62) Indeed, what happens when the simple curiosity of a young child is stifled? It is precisely at the critical time when the world is new and all things interesting that a child’s learning should be cultivated, nurtured and developed. The educator’s ability to respect and develop this ingenuous curiosity is vital. This is true not only in young children, but in those of all ages. I infer that the critical time or window for potential occurs not once but multiple times throughout one’s life. It is the educator’s responsibility to recognize in the learner such moments and cultivate their curiosity to develop it into critical knowledge. Freire (1998) affirms that “learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned. For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future. The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning.” (p.48) The traditional method and banking system of education does not have the ability to nurture that curiosity, and the consequences are grave. When such curiosity is shut down, I surmise that it inhibits, perhaps indefinitely, the potential for further curiosity and knowledge.

Why is this curiosity so important? Because curiosity, as Dewey and Freire both suggest, is the prime point of all endeavors in education. Curiosity allows an individual to question, experience, learn and inquire even further. Inquisitiveness is the beginning of all learning and what fuels the desire for more experience. Freire affirms “it’s impossible to talk of respect for students for the dignity that is in the process of coming to be, for the identities that are in the process of construction, without taking into consideration the conditions in which they are living and the
importance of the knowledge derived from life experience, which they bring with them to school. I can no way underestimate such knowledge. Or what is worse ridicule it” (Freire, 62). Freire comprehends the importance of the learner’s own experiences in how they read the world and the education they receive. The educator must take into account the power of the student’s experiences as an impetus for their “epistemological curiosity” and thirst for knowledge. The learner’s experiences shape and affect the reading and understanding of the world. Freire states, “the kind of education that does not recognize the right to express appropriate anger against injustice, against disloyalty, against the negation of love, against exploitation, and against violence fails to see the educational role implicit in the expression of these feelings” (p. 45). Almost all experiences in an individual’s life can serve to be a catalyst for learning.

For Freire, improving the conditions of one’s environment or the injustices one witnesses comes hand in hand with education. He states “if education alone cannot transform society, without it society cannot change either.” (p. 47) Therefore, when Freire speaks of an individual's awareness of their “unfinishedness” and “epistemological curiosity,” it is a call for action. In Freire’s eyes, it is the responsibility of ordinary people awakened to their own limitless possibility, to overthrow unjust systems that exist. Freire’s pedagogy of education is undeniably connected to fighting for social justice. It cannot be separated.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi

The father of Soka Education, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, like Dewey and Freire, called for educators to undermine their own self importance in order to teach effectively. It is Makiguchi’s firm belief that education exists to serve the child, not the other way around. Makiguchi views education as “the process of learning to learn.” (p. 13) Therefore, in Makiguchi’s view it is not the end product but rather the process of arousing curiosity, making mistakes, and the experiences gained that make up learning. This process is a precondition in order for the learner to be able to unlock the infinite capacity of knowledge.

Makiguchi believes that teachers play a vital role in this process and states how “[teachers] should come down from the throne where they are ensconced as the object of veneration to become public servants who offer guidance to those who seek to ascend the throne of learning. They should not be masters who offer themselves as paragons but partners in the discovery of new models”. (p. 14) Makiguchi rejects the model where teachers are the sole knowledge bearers and students are only recipients of that knowledge. It is truly his desire for both teacher and learner to inquire, probe, and in the process learn together. This requires, in the educator, the commitment to lifelong learning and continuous growth.

Makiguchi was deeply concerned that the education in Japan appeared “to consist of empty abstraction—with scholars lacking actual teaching experience importing new theories from the West and imposing these on classroom teachers—or to be designed to instill narrow-minded and intolerant nationalism”(p. 5) Makiguchi disagreed with most educators and policy makers of his time. He disliked how those with authority, who did not know at all the realities of the classroom nor had any experience in the trenches of the schools, had the authority to implement educational standards throughout Japan. Discontent with the lack of clear purpose in the teaching practices of his time, Makiguchi urged that teachers themselves, based on their real experiences, must be the ones who develop concrete practices. According to Dayle M. Bethel (1989), the foremost scholar on Makiguchi’s philosophy of education, Makiguchi’s first step toward educational reform was asserting that the “purpose in education must grow out of the needs and daily lives of people.” (p. 17). What purpose would education serve if it were not relevant to those who acquired it? Makiguchi concludes that the happiness of the learner is and should be the primary focus and purpose of education.
Makiguchi states that the “realization of happiness is the primary purpose of education and that all educational plans and programs must begin with this basic understanding.” (p. 17) Makiguchi was aware that the quintessential goal and purpose of education is the happiness of the child.

If the purpose of education is the happiness of the learner, then it is crucial to understand how happiness is defined. Is happiness longevity? Is it the attainment of great economic success or early retirement? Makiguchi states that “some people may resist accepting happiness as the purpose of education because they consider it a selfish, personal goal, but as we examine it…we will find a broader definition of happiness that is a responsible goal of life.” (p. 23) Given that we live in societies and not in isolation from one another, in families, within neighborhoods and communities, we are unable to completely exclude neither the individual from society nor society from the individual. For this reason, Makiguchi firmly believes that an individual cannot achieve a true sense of happiness without the happiness of those around the individual. He states, “we cannot shut ourselves off from the concerns of the community.” (p. 24) According to Makiguchi, true happiness is attainable only by sharing in the trials and successes of other persons and of our community. Therefore, any true understanding of education and happiness must include the promise of a full commitment to society.

Makiguchi’s educational philosophy, Soka Education by definition, requires a lifelong commitment to the improvement and contribution of society. Like Freire, Soka Education requires in the learner an active and unrelenting pursuit of community improvement and value creation in society.

PART II:

In the latter half of this paper, I build on the ideas set forth by Dewey, Freire and Makiguchi on the importance of nurturing the learner’s natural curiosity, the value of their experiences and the educator’s role in facilitating both previous and current experiences. I parallel Makiguchi’s emphasis on the roles of school, home and community as equally important factors in the learner’s education and how SUA is incorporating these three essential aspects. I also interlace personal experiences as a former student who has experienced SUA’s curriculum, personal viewpoint as an alumna and now my thoughts on SUA from the perspective of a staff in Residential Life whose responsibility is to educate. Most notably, I include successor of Makiguchi’s educational philosophy and founder of the Soka school system and SUA, Daisaku Ikeda’s thoughts and vision for SUA.

I affirm that while SUA’s current curriculum addresses the role of the “school, home and community,” there is still great room to address improvements in the role of “community”. Residential Life’s new Co-Curricular Model, which focuses on community service, addresses the role of “community” and buttresses Makiguchi’s vision of the three roles of school, home and community in education. When students learn material in the classroom or “school”, continue their discourse at “home” in the residence halls with peers, and then have the opportunity to apply their knowledge through community service projects in the “community”, it achieves the holistic education that Makiguchi called for while simultaneously positively contributing to the community.

Makiguchi insists that effective education can only be delivered with a three-prong approach involving the school, home and community, each equally responsible for the education and development of the learner. This proposal puts the student at the center of the learning process rather than preceding schools of thought which had the school at the center. Makiguchi understood the value of these three roles and its ability to facilitate learning. He states “study is not seen as a preparation for living, but rather study takes place while living, and living takes place in the midst of study. Study and actual living are seen as more than parallels; they inform one another intercontextually, study in living and living in study, throughout one’s whole life.” (p. 21) I concur
with this statement and strongly encourage incorporating actual experience outside of the classroom to progress in tandem with the learning in the school.

I believe that SUA does indeed use the three-prong approach in education. Clearly, the SUA undergraduate curriculum serves as the “school” that Makiguchi speaks of. When Ikeda envisioned for all students to live on-campus for four years in the residence halls, I believe he envisioned the residence halls to serve as the “home” of the three-prong approach. I am confident that the residence halls are serving an educative role with students.

As a student, I clearly remember taking the Core II course during my sophomore year and having a passionate debate with my classmates about the subject matter. While the actual duration of the class facilitated by the professor lasted only 90 minutes, the heated discussion with peers carried on long after class. For hours we continued to share our differing perspectives walking together through campus, settling in the living rooms of the residence halls and even during dinner. The residential community served as a playground for further knowledge; while it was certainly home, it was also an extension of the classroom. Learning, in my experience, does not end in the classroom; it continues in the residential community and is facilitated by the student themselves in the form of self-reflection, through discussion and interactions with fellow peers and by way of staff residing in the residence halls who serve as educators. Student development is facilitated through academics within the formal classroom learning environment and also through personal experiences and general life skills. As a residential campus, Soka students are provided with distinctive accommodations within a unique residence hall setting. Unlike a "dormitory" offering primarily sleep quarters, the residence halls are a dynamic environment offering living and learning opportunities for residents to share intellectual and educational goals and grow through community engagement, interpersonal relationships and social interaction within a diverse community. For the Student Affairs and Residential Life educators, the residence halls serve as the classroom. The Residence Halls serve as a crucial place in the learner's development of self because students are constantly learning through human interaction in the residence halls which is indicative of the residence hall experience.

At SUA we have in place several programs that allow for the student to engage with the community. We have internship opportunities that encourage students to work with the community where both the organization and the students themselves benefit from the experience. The study abroad program is another example where students, through personal experience are able to learn from the community, in this case a global community outside of SUA. Alternative Spring Break (ASB) sponsored yearly by the Student Activities office serves as another example. In response to the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina, this program was born from the strong desire of students who offered their time and services during their spring break in order to assist in relief efforts. It is almost always the case that, even greater than what the ASB participants are able to offer to the intended community, is the invaluable experience and insight gained through offering their time and service in the trip. In line with the mission of the university, these university sponsored programs serve as a catalyst to realizing the contributive aspect of the mission statement. As such, opportunities for students to learn from and directly work with the “community,” are a critical area ripe for greater investment.

Some of the current programs in place are short term experiences which are offered throughout the academic year. However, they limit successive or ongoing learning opportunity due to the duration of the program. The Office of Residential Life established the Co-Curricular Model this year in line with the mission of the university and its own mission with the intent to provide a holistic living learning experience that runs throughout the academic year. The mission of the Office of Residential Life at SUA is to support residents in cultivating a meaningful living-learning
community and to provide a purposeful experiential program fostering student leadership where residents develop life and interpersonal skills, self-responsibility, and an appreciation for diversity.

The Co-curricular Model that Residential Life has adapted states the following:

The overall goal of SUA's co-curricular approach to Residential Life is to re-conceptualize educational programming in the residence halls by establishing a common focus on student learning and fostering partnerships among faculty and student affairs educators to provide an integrated learning environment for students. Foundational to this approach is the concept of “Learning Reconsidered”, an emerging paradigm in student development that emphasizes learning as a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development. The expressed intent is to produce intentional learners who can adapt to new environments, integrate knowledge from different sources, and continue learning throughout their lives.

As indicated in the statement above, this new Co-Curricular Model is the basis for the following four main focus areas:

1. Community Building/Student Development Programs
2. Scholar's Peak Program
3. Community Service Program
4. Faculty In Residence Program

My primary focus for the sake of my paper is the Community Service Program. The Community Service focus area of the Co-Curricular Model applies active citizenship and student learning principles to develop the individual student and their role in the building of community with an emphasis on service learning. It focuses on the role of members in the internal and external community and introduces students to social issues and the impact upon those communities. Residents participate in service learning projects, culminating in a hall-wide community service project. The goals of this program are two-fold: to practice global citizenship through group participation in civic projects and activities and; to understand the inter-connection of learning and community engagement.

The learning outcomes intended with the Community Service Programs are to be actively engaged contributors in local service opportunities, to develop a greater understanding and awareness of community service projects available in the local and regional community, and lastly, to identify issues that members of the community are facing. Through the process of this experience, we hope to arouse in the students a passion and understanding of servant leadership and global citizenship. Ikeda (2001) states, "what our world most requires now...is the kind of education that fosters love for humankind, that develops character—that provides an intellectual basis for the realization of peace and empowers learners to contribute to and improve society." This is precisely what the Community Service Program intends on and is accomplishing.

The Co-curricular model ties together both theory and practice and simultaneously integrates service and volunteerism. An example of this holistic curricular approach can be found in this year's Learning Cluster.

At the beginning of this academic year, I chose the non-profit organization Invisible Children as the community service project for Umoja Hall 370. In the fall semester I hosted a small screening in my apartment for residents of Umoja Hall, informed residents about the organization through flyers, posted passive programs in the elevators to educate students and a organized...
University-wide screening to raise awareness on a larger scale. Both students who already knew about Invisible Children and other students who were previously unaware came together and deepened their understanding. This university-wide screening of invisible Children’s documentary roused interest in many students. When asked to describe their impression after the viewing the documentary students used the following adjectives: powerful, upsetting, heartbreaking, devastated, helpless, determined, hopeful, overwhelmed, astonished, infuriated, grateful, motivated and unsatisfied. These adjectives provide insight into the kind of impact the screening had on these students and simultaneously how it has sparked in them a thirst to learn more and a desire to take action.

As a result of the Community Service Program and a student’s strong passion for Invisible Children, a learning cluster was formed surrounding this topic. Immediately following the university-wide screening many students expressed an interest and desire to enroll in the class. As a fieldtrip for the course, student had the opportunity to speak first hand with staff working everyday at the Invisible Children headquarters. As the culminating project of the course, students hosted a screening of the Invisible Children documentary and went further to create their own. The documentary they created served as a way for the students to present the content of the course and share it with the SUA community.

The Invisible Children Community Service Program will continue throughout the Spring Semester and culminate with another documentary screening in April. This screening however, will not only include the university constituents but also our local community. Umoja Hall 370 residents and students from the learning cluster will partner with local high school students to raise awareness about the conflict in our communities. I presume that the local high school students will be able to further their knowledge about the conflict with SUA students and our students too can learn from the local students.

These students’ experience went from beginning a journey from a simple curiosity and thirst for knowledge, to creating a learning cluster, to developing a deeper understanding of the conflict, to raising awareness on-campus and, in the coming months, will outreach even further to the local community outside of SUA. Through deepening their knowledge and realizing their capacity to execute change, the students have become agents of change themselves.

Ikeda (2006) passionately calls out that “here at Soka University, what I ask of you is not to wait passively for the university to do something for you, but to engage—proudly, bravely, actively, passionately—in the construction work needed to make this university a new beacon of hope” (p. 41) I take great pride in contributing to the foundational stages of this new Co-Curricular model and look forward to the vast possibilities of working collectively as university constituents to ensure the greatest learning experiences for our students.

Soka University of America’s undergraduate curriculum is only in its ninth year. As a student of the second class of SUA, I witnessed the struggles of establishing a new curriculum and pioneering a university. Likewise, I had the fortune to see milestone accomplishments and progress of the university through programs offered. The Residential Life Co-Curriculum is yet another aspect of the growth and improvement of SUA. It is still a fledgling in its foundational year and has vast opportunity for further improvement and enhancement. Along with the Co-Curriculum, we have established an assessment that measures if and how effectively the learning outcomes intended from the curriculum are being met and look forward to presenting the results in the near future. As a result of the consorted efforts of faculty and the academic rigor they provide in the classroom, the staff and the intentional programs offered in the residential community and of course through personal experience and curiosity of the students themselves, a powerful and holistic curriculum is currently being provided to SUA’s undergraduate students.
The role of a student’s experience, both what a student brings with them to the classroom and the experiences provided and facilitated by the educator, are crucial in facilitating learning. This is because it informs and establishes how the student understands the content of learning. The emphasis of Community Service in the Co-curricular model is exactly in line, not only with Makiguchi’s idea of the school, home and community but also with Ikeda’s vision for the university to contribute to society. Ikeda (2006) states, “I ask that each and every one of you become the kind of strong and capable person who continues always to proudly tread the path of contribution to society, working for the happiness of the world’s ordinary citizens. For it is precisely in such a life that you will find your highest pride, purpose and joy.” (p. 179) A student’s life experiences, the learning in the residential community, and the wisdom gained in the classrooms, in no particular order, are constantly informing one another. In line with Dewey’s assertion for the learner’s experience to inform education, Freire’s passionate cry to act against tyrannical structure as an person aware of their unfinishedness, Makiguchi’s insight to contribute to society and the immediate community as a purpose for education, and Ikeda’s vision to nurture global citizens unswerving in living a contributive life, SUA is moving forward in a new pioneering phase. The view of education is not disjointed but rather united with a vision where student affairs and faculty are aware of the possibilities of stimulating the learner by providing an integrative and holistic education that includes experience both inside and outside the classroom.
Resources

How would a world of social justice look and what would we discover there? It is hard to say since no one has ever visited such a place. Social justice is an imaginative ideal that we will never fully realize. That does not mean we should not care about it deeply and pursue it passionately. Ideals provide a moral compass to direct our daily actions. We cannot come closer to social justice unless we have some idea of where we are going.

How would a world of social justice look? What do you think? What do you see and feel when you envision social justice? Today, I will share with you some of my thinking about what we would find in such a world, and hope you will share with me some of your thinking. Let us strive together for a better sense of direction.

We will have most of what we envisage social justice to be when we have democracy not merely as a political institution, but as a way of life. However, like social justice, democracy is an elusive ideal. All agree that it involves many things including equality, individuality, and freedom. Nonetheless, there is much disagreement about what these terms mean. Too often, we reduce equality to sameness, individuality to isolated detachment from others, and freedom to capriciousness. A better vision of social justice and democracy requires a more bountiful understanding of these three doctrines and their connections. Let us turn to the thought of John Dewey, who many call the philosopher of democracy.

Many misconceive equality as treating everyone exactly the same. However, such a conception may spawn injustice because we are all different with many different needs, desires, and abilities. Women are different from men. Some people are born with superior intellectual or athletic ability while experiencing emotional, artistic, and social handicaps. We enter the world in different
social classes where some experience great privilege while others are woefully deprived. Many people suffer racial and ethnic discrimination, deculturation, and other forms of social oppression. Wisdom suggests we should attend to differences when they matter and ignore them when they do not.

Once we go beyond equality as sameness, we can begin to connect equality to individuality in a new way. We should think of equality as a dress or suit that we must carefully tailor to fit each individual. What we require is the ideal of moral equality. Dewey observes that “equality is moral, a matter of justice socially secured, not of physical or psychological endowment” (MW 13: 299). In his magnificent essay, “Creative Democracy—the Task Before Us,” Dewey writes:

The democratic faith in human equality is belief that every human being, independent of the quantity or range of his personal endowment, has the right to equal opportunity with every other person for development of whatever gifts he has. The democratic belief in the principle of leadership is a generous one. It is universal. (LW 14: 226-227)

The move here from abstract equality to concrete equal opportunity is helpful. There are other ideas in this passage that require us to rethink the very meaning of equality, “equal opportunity,” and democratic leadership. Humanistic, moral equality embraces the idea of individually unique creative potential, eschews sameness, abstract classification, or quantification, and decries hierarchical, feudalistic relations.

What Dewey is asserting is not that every individual should have an equal opportunity to take a predetermined place in the existing social order, much less that everyone should be treated exactly the same. Instead, he is claiming that each individual has a right to have their unique potential actualized to the fullest extent possible that they may make their creative contribution to transforming society. To think this way, we must cease believing leadership means government by an elite group of experts. Instead, we want government not only for but also by the people.

The Soka University of America Principles read as follows: “Foster leaders of culture in the community. Foster leaders of humanism in society. Foster leaders of pacifism in the world. Foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity.” Soka education distributes the leadership function among students, faculty, and staff, not just administration. The Soka Education Student Research Project provides a fine example of such expansive democratic leadership.

Moral equality shuns sameness, abstract classification, and rigid quantification. Dewey thought that any “intelligent defender of democratic equality” could see that moral equality cannot be conceived on the basis of legal, political and economic arrangements. For all of these are bound to be classificatory; to be concerned with uniformities and statistical averages. Moral equality means incommensurability, the inapplicability of common and quantitative standards. It means intrinsic qualities which require unique opportunities and differential manifestation; superiority in finding a specific work to do, not in power for attaining ends common to a class of competitors, which is bound to result in putting a premium on mastery over others. (MW 13: 299)

Moral equality respects the uniqueness of every individual. Because every individual is unique, every individual has distinctive creative potential. Soka education seeks to aid individuals to identify and actualize their unique creative capacity that they may make their special social contributions. It contrasts sharply with what Dewey calls feudalistic education, which assumes unjust social relations.

In aristocratic feudalistic societies, education acts as a sorting machine that classifies individuals and assigns them a predetermined place in a presumably fixed and final social hierarchy. Instead of sorting and accommodating physical and mental abilities, disposition, and habits to the economic, governmental, and religious institutions of present society, a democratic education would
affirm moral equality for the sake of actualizing unique human potential to re-create society. Dewey writes:

When classifications are rigid, the quantitative, the more or less, phase of superiority is inevitably conspicuous. Castes are ranks or grades of superiority; within each caste the hierarchical order of higher and lower is repeated . . . . [It] is evidence of the hold upon us still exercised by feudal arrangements. Our new feudalism of the industrial life which ranks from the great financier through the captain of industry down to the unskilled laborer, revives and reinforces the feudal disposition to ignore individual capacity displayed in free or individualized pursuits. (296)

Daisaku Ikeda (2001), founder of Soka University of America, states that “to be human in the full sense of the word is to lead a creative life” (174). The goal of Soka education is to change the world for the better by creating new values. It is not to conform to pre-existing value structures without question. That is why the mottos of Soka University read: “Be philosophers of a renaissance of life. Be world citizens in solidarity for peace. Be the pioneers of a global civilization.” One cannot pioneer renewal and peace by conforming to today’s world of injury and strife. The global injustice of the new feudalism may yet defeat the old dream of democratic social justice. Certainly, it threatens the philosophy of Soka Education.

To free individual creativity to change the world, we must abandon all forms of standardized education that rely on preset outcomes, rigid curricula, and depends on classification and quantitative comparisons. Instead, Dewey seeks a democratic aristocracy of everyone: “The democrat with his faith in moral equality is the representative of aristocracy made universal. His equality is that of distinction made universal” (MW 13: 300). In the following passage, Dewey reaffirms the ideal of universal moral equality:

It was once supposed, at least by some, that the purpose of education, along with equipping students with some indispensable tools, was to discover and release individualized capacities so that they might make their own way with whatever of social change is involved in their operation (297).

Soka education still supposes that the purpose of education is to enable individuals to make their creative contribution to social transformation in the quest for social justice. Dewey contrasts this democratic notion of education with the feudalistic concept:

But now we welcome a procedure which under the title of science sinks the individual in a numerical class; judges him with reference to capacity to fit into a limited number of vocations ranked according to present business standards; assigns him to a predestined niche and thereby does whatever education can do to perpetuate the present order. (297)

Dewey worries that we have lost the meaning of the word democracy, which he insists remains “faith in individuality, in uniquely distinctive qualities in each normal human being; faith in corresponding unique modes of activity that create new ends [i.e., values], with willing acceptance of the modifications of the established order entailed by the release of individualized capacities” (297). With you here at Soka University, I share this faith in value creation.

According to Dewey, if we can reaffirm the democratic faith in true individuality, we can rethink the very meaning of aristocracy:
Democracy in this sense denotes, one may say, aristocracy carried to its limit. It is a claim that every human being as an individual may be the best for some particular purpose and hence be the most fitted to rule, to lead, in that specific respect. The habit of fixed and numerically limited classifications is the enemy alike of true aristocracy and true democracy. It is because our professed aristocrats surrender so gladly to the habit of quantitative or comparative classifications that it is easy to detect snobbery of greater or less refinement beneath their professed desire for a régime of distinction. For only the individual is ultimately distinctive; the rest is a matter of common qualities differing merely in degree. (297-298)

Let me provide you with an example from my many years working with a wonderful teacher, Bev Strager, in a fourth grade reading and writing workshop (see Garrison, 1997).

For two hours a week in Bev’s class, students wrote and composed stories. Every six weeks they would “publish” a story in a class collection. Students at all levels in this mixed ability classroom wrote good stories and carefully corrected spelling and grammar. It is not hard to see why since we all crave self-expression and we all seek to appear good in public before our peers. Students also often read stories sitting in “the author’s chair.” Bev usually occupied this rocking chair, and it was understood that when someone was reading a story students should provide the same respect they would the teacher. In addition, however, everyone wanted others to listen when they read. However, things were a different when Tom (a pseudonym) read. Tom had Down syndrome. He authored his stories by talking them through with a teacher’s aid. When time came to “read” stories, Tom invariably provided a dramatic narrative where he acted out the story often playing the role of several characters simultaneously. He knew no inhibition in his performances and they were riveting. When it was Tom’s turn to tell stories, there was an electric atmosphere of carnivalesque excitement in the class. Squeals of laughter, often tinged with pathos, accompanied every performance. Children and adults always wildly applauded. My point is that for the particular purposes of dramatic narrative, Tom was the aristocrat; that is, the one most fitted to rule, to lead.

Usually, such sorting as we achieve using standardized tests is “taken in the name of aristocracy, even of intellectual aristocracy, and as part of an attack upon the tendencies of democracy to ignore individuality” (297). Ironically, the ideal of sameness established by educational standardization sustains a feudalistic, elitist aristocracy and destroys deep democracy. Traditional feudalism assumed one hierarchy from serf to lord. Rather than an ever-renewing democracy and peaceful, genuinely productive, sometimes even humanistically creative, capitalistic competition, modern feudalism only acknowledges the vicious competition of a predatory capitalistic order of wealth thereby perpetuating social injustice and global conflict. The great idea of 19th century capitalism was the refinement of natural resources into standardized interchangeable parts for the global production function. The great idea of the 21st century seems to be accomplishing the same thing with human resources.

What fuels modern feudalism is the sameness concealed inside the Enlightenment ideal of the atomistic, individual born with innate free will and rationality, which actually mocks true individualism. It assumes that every individual is born with the same innate free will and the same innate rationality. Thus, if every individual uses her or his free will and rationality correctly, every so-called “individual” would do exactly the same thing in the same situation. There is no room for style, for genuinely creative self-expression. Any other result implies the individual is deficient in the exercise of will or reason, or perhaps both.

Most forms of modern education assume a fixed norm of performance and rely on standardized tests to distribute the student population around some predetermined, one-size-fits-all norm. Eventually, the goal is to sort everyone and place them somewhere along a fixed and final
hierarchical régime of distinction. Such education, mis-education really, falls far short of recognizing the aristocracy of everyone in a just society having as many socially valued hierarchies as there are socially responsible creative individuals. Fundamentally, the feudalism of modern, parasitical capitalism, as well as exploitive pseudo-democratic state policies, like the feudalism of the middle ages, fails to recognize genuine, value-creating individuality and individual human revolution. Soka education challenges such forms of feudalism whether found in the West or the East.

Dewey proclaims: “Personality, selfhood, subjectivity are eventual functions that emerge with complexly organized interactions, organic and social” (LW 1: 162). He believes every individual is born with unique potential, but true individuality is an achievement. Further, we do not have latent potential that simply unfolds from within to actualize our potential. Instead, we need proper interactions with others. Dewey also states: “There are at a given time unactualized potentialities in an individual because and in as far as there are in existence other things with which it has not as yet interacted” (LW 14: 109). We need others different from ourselves; that is why pluralistic democracy is so important. Dewey observes: “To cooperate by giving differences a chance to show themselves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of the other persons but is a means of enriching one's own life-experience, is inherent in the democratic personal way of life” (229). Similarly, Daisaku Ikeda (2001) finds that “the individual can only become fully realized through interaction with others” (68). Genuine individuality is a creative social achievement requiring otherness and difference. Equality as sameness suppresses individual development by suppressing diversity.

Individuals are contingent social constructions. Hence, self-actualization and creative self-expression are social functions requiring otherness and difference in a pluralistic democratic community. Thus, Dewey concludes:

IN THE REALIZATION OF INDIVIDUALITY THERE IS FOUND ALSO THE
NEEDED REALIZATION OF SOME COMMUNITY OF PERSONS OF WHICH
THE INDIVIDUAL IS A MEMBER; AND, CONVERSELY, THE AGENT WHO
DULY SATISFIES THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH HE SHARES, BY THAT SAME
CONDUCT SATISFIES HIMSELF. (EW 3: 322)

In struggling for social justice in the community, we bring benefit to ourselves as we create value for others through dialogue and other forms of concerted action in our local as well as global communities. This is a critical principle of Soka education.

The preceding comments point to another problem with modern, especially Western, individualism. It places an excessive emphasis on atomistic individuality and detachment from others in ways that harm social justice. Enlightenment rationalists tend to trust in their innate rationality to discern the objective conditions of a world entirely independent of their thought, feeling, or action. They then seek to conform their will to what that reality supposedly dictates. Therefore, they tend to denigrate creative self-expression. Romantics reacting against the Enlightenment are inclined to glorify the inner subjective self and seek creative self-expression by autonomously unfolding their unique latent potential. Romanticism leads to selfish ideals of self-actualization that emphasize free will while abandoning rationality. Romantics seek self-expression at the expense of social responsibility while ignoring objective conditions. However, Dewey observes: “The kind of self which is formed though action which is faithful to relations with others will be a fuller and broader self than one which is cultivated in isolation from or in opposition to the purposes and needs of others” (LW 7: 302). The problem with selfish self-actualization is that it tends to cut emergent individuals off from the connections with others necessary to growth.

Both Enlightenment rationalists and romantic reactionaries believe in a false dualism of subject versus object, self versus society. Deweyan pragmatists seek to overcome these dualisms by restoring the interaction between the subject and the object, self and society. The rationalists are
right that there are objective conditions in the world that we must acknowledge and work with if we are to create social justice, but they often lack the ability to imagine alternative possibilities. That is, ideals that might help us change the world instead of our passively conforming to it. The romantic is right about human imagination and self-expression, but often use it to escape from rather than engage and transform the world. Romanticism goes astray when it becomes lost in self-indulgence and inner fantasy detached from objective conditions. After all, human nature is a part of nature and creatively participates in its doings and makings. If we can overcome disabling dualisms, we can rejoin subject with object, self with society, and reason with creativity, thereby, securing genuine freedom. Freedom, like the self, society, and reason itself is an achievement, not an endowment.

Culture has us before we have it. True individuality requires reflecting on the customs and norms of the culture that shaped us before re-creating ourselves by re-creating our culture. Such reflection is both a critical and a creative activity. Social justice also calls for critical-creative reflection. Critical intelligence can often locate injustice and analyze its causes, but it requires creative imagination to form ideals of justice that do not yet exist. Dewey insists: “Intelligence is the key to freedom in act” (MW 14: 210). He prefers the word “intelligence” to rationality because for him intelligence includes emotional acuity and creative imagination, not just cold logic and classification of the world as we passively find it. Without passion, reason cannot act to transform the world, nor can we express compassion for others. Without imagination, reason becomes trapped in the actual world unable to perceive ideal possibilities. Social justice itself is utopian ideal. It literally exists no place.

We may find an example of engaged, critical-creative intelligent action in Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. No place in America then or now has fully realized King’s dream. Still, it has inspired the struggle for civil rights and freedom not only for racial justice, but also women’s rights and rights for the disabled, among others. Moreover, King had an intelligent strategy. It was that of civil disobedience borrowed from Henry David Thoreau via Mahatma Gandhi. In the struggle for social justice, we must remember that action is always required and that passive conformity to the laws or social structures my perpetuate injustice. Too often tyrants write laws and create curricula that benefit themselves while oppressing the many such as the Jim Crow laws in the old American South.

Today, I have shared my vision of social justice in terms of equality, individuality, and freedom. I believe the principles of Soka education embody such a vision. What do you think?
Bibliography

Citations of the works of Dewey are to the critical edition published by Southern Illinois University Press. Volume and page numbers follow the initials of the series. Abbreviations for the volumes used are:

MW  The Middle Works (1899-1924)
LW  The Later Works (1925-1953)


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ii Ibid.
Daisaku Ikeda’s Conception of Cosmopolitan Education

Gonzalo Obelleiro

Class of 2005

The idea of world citizenship has been part of Ikeda’s writings since very early in his career. References to the ideas of East-West dialogue and of world peace have figured in his writings for decades. However, the idea of education for global citizenship took center stage decisively in Ikeda’s educational thought with the development of a distinctive philosophical approach known as “Buddhist Humanism,” which began to emerge in his writings from the late 1980s and early 1990s. From what is available in English translation, two short pieces articulate a vision of cosmopolitan education most explicitly: “Education Toward Global Citizenship,” an address delivered at Teachers College, Columbia University in June 1996, and “The University of the 21st Century: Cradle of World Citizens,” an essay written for the occasion of the first undergraduate commencement ceremony of Soka University of America in May 2005.¹

¹ Citations of works by Ikeda hereinafter will be noted as follows:


The aim of this presentation is very modest. I will look at Ikeda’s idea of global citizenship as articulated in these two pieces and try to show that it is based on the idea of human revolution. Then, I will look at the social dimension of human revolution and from there I will try to draw some implications for social justice.

**Wisdom, Compassion and Courage**

In both pieces, I argue, Ikeda develops a conception of the world citizen as a human life characterized by a continuous and sustained process of human revolution. In “Education toward Global Citizenship,” he offers a definition of global citizenship in terms of the Buddhist principle of the three virtues (santoku • 三德) of wisdom, courage and compassion. He renders them as:

“1) The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living; 2) 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; 3) The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one’s immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.” (SE, 101)

After listing the three virtues of the global citizen, Ikeda proceeds to explore their internal connections. He begins by describing the principle of “all-encompassing interrelatedness” (101) as the nature of the world, and wisdom as the capacity to perceive it, a “wisdom grounded in…empathetic resonance with all forms of life” (101). The wording is not accidental; a wisdom that is grounded in “empathetic resonance” is a wisdom that is grounded in compassion. In the following sentence Ikeda makes it explicit: “wisdom and compassion are intimately linked and mutually reinforcing,” later adding, “the compassionate desire to find ways of contributing to the well-being of others…gives rise to limitless wisdom” (101-102). He then casts compassion in terms of courage: “Buddhism teaches that good and evil are potentialities that exist in all people. Compassion consists in the sustained and courageous effort to seek out the good in all people, whoever they may be, however they may behave” (102). Courage is constitutive of sustained compassionate action.

In his “Mahayana Buddhism and Twenty-first Century Civilization,” in a section titled “The Interrelationship of all Things,” Ikeda renders the virtue of wisdom in terms of what makes the difference between the “lesser self’ (shoga • 小我), caught up in the snares of egoism” and the ‘greater self’ (taiga • 大我), fused with the life of the universe” (NH, 161). Later in the same section, he describes the greater self not in terms of wisdom, but in terms of compassion: “the greater self…is another way of expressing the openness and expansiveness of character that embraces the suffering of all people as one’s own” (162). A few paragraphs earlier, he quotes Nichiren writing: “When you concentrate the exertions of one hundred millions aeons in a single life-moment, the three inherent properties of the

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2 In the Buddhist tradition the term santoku or three virtues finds expression in a number of sets of three. From the way Ikeda words his definition of three elements of global citizenship it is likely that he draws inspiration not only from the wisdom, courage, compassion triad, which describe virtues in terms of qualities of consciousness, but also from “the virtue of wisdom to perceive the nature of all things, the virtue of eradicating earthly desires, and the virtue of benefiting living beings” (Soka-Gakkai (2000). Soka Gakkai Dictionary of Buddhism. Tokyo, Soka Gakkai, 738).
Buddha will become manifest in your every thought and act” (159). The three virtues of wisdom, compassion and courage are inseparable; they constitute three aspects of a single coherent orientation.

**Human Revolution**

The orientation of the global citizen is cultivated by means of what Ikeda terms the process of human revolution. It is my contention that for Ikeda, human revolution is the idea that structures his philosophy. The concept re-occurs in his writings more often than any other, perhaps only matched by the idea of the oneness of mentor and disciple. It is in light of the principle of human revolution that notions of value creation, teacher-student relationship, and even social justice find their place and meaning within his philosophy of education. “The focus of Soka, or value-creating education,” Ikeda writes, “must always be the achievement of...human revolution.” (YPS, 176)

Ikeda inherited the term human revolution (ningen kakumei • 人間革命) from his mentor Josei Toda. Toda borrowed it from an address by Tokyo University President Shigeru Nambara in 1947. Nambara used the expression to mean that a radical change in the way of thinking of Japanese people was required to ensure the success of the social and political reforms initiated by the American occupation forces. Toda appropriated the term and employed it to mean not accommodation to changes in societal institutions and practices, but a process of spiritual transformation as the driving force for social change.

In “Education Toward Global Citizenship” there is only one mention of human revolution. In reference to the challenges of “war, environmental degradation, the North-South development gap and divisions among people based on differences of ethnicity, religion or language,” Ikeda writes, “the human being is the point to which we must return and from which we must depart anew. What is required is a human transformation—a human revolution” (SE, 99). However, I argue that the section on the virtues of the global citizen functions as the development of a vision of the embodiment of human revolution.

For Ikeda, human revolution as a process and an ethical stance towards the world emerges naturally as a response to the realization of the nature of reality. That is the big idea behind the deep integration of wisdom, compassion and courage. The moment one attains the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life as the nature of reality, compassion and courage follow. Wisdom, compassion, and courage are analytic moments of an orientation that is simply deep awareness of the nature of the world, provided that engagement with the world through action is part of deep awareness. For Ikeda, to simply hold certain commitments about equality and diversity and subscribe to the idea of human brotherhood is not enough for a cosmopolitan orientation. To truly inhabit this world as it is, and engage with it, one must strive in a sustained and continuous process of human revolution, enacting wisdom, compassion and courage. In “Cradle of World Citizens” he exhorts SUA graduates to embody a philosophy of world citizenship; towards the end of that essay, he quotes the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset: “To live is, in fact, to have dealings with the world: to address oneself to it, exert oneself in it, and occupy oneself

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3 I see the ideas of oneness of mentor and disciple and human revolution closely related. I interpret the mentor and disciple relationship as one of a mutual commitment to the process of human revolution.  
with it” (YPS, 183). Global citizenship is an ethically demanding philosophy, for it requires
that one engages with the world courageously and compassionately, and that, Ikeda tells us,
comes inevitably with the realization of interconnectedness, which entails a sense of
responsibility for the world.

Given the close connection between the interconnected nature of the world and the
virtues of the global citizen, I propose that we think of human revolution as the creative
integration of awareness of the interconnectedness of all life and self-mastery, or the discipline
of interconnectedness. To clarify what I mean, let me share an example from my own life at SUA,
which I think you will understand. I am sorry for using my own case for illustration, which is
far from exemplary. However, the concept I want to explore lends itself to examples that can
be described “from the inside.”

When I was a student here, my classmates and I experienced our life at Soka through
the myth of founding. By myth I do not mean delusion, but I mean a narrative through
which we create meaning out of experience. As a student, I was very impatient all the time,
seeking for experiences of moral, aesthetic and existential intensity, experiences that would
make me feel that I was part of the founding of the university. I treated my classes, my times
of solitude and study, my interpersonal interactions and school activities as opportunities to
find such experiences of intensity. But in all my enthusiasm I was an unwise time manager
and was always lacking sleep and coughing. Besides, the intensity I was seeking was quite
impossible to sustain, and I would often fall back on depression, self-pity and bitterness.
After Soka, partly because I am older, I found a more balanced and healthy rhythm of
imagining and taking action, cultivating good habits and breaking through the limitations of
bad ones. However, recently I had to stay up one night at work to finish an important
assignment. After returning home, I wrote the following lines:

Almost 4 am, leaving the office, no one in sight
I can smell the morning mist
I am tired, I must press my eyes close for a second
To take a hold of a thought
This is what my time at Soka was like,
In the middle of the night, quietly returning home
Carrying a heavy weight on my shoulders

And a sense of mission

This recent experience reminded me that moments of careless joy were truly
exceptional. The feeling that pervaded most of my time here was being tired, with a weighty
sense of responsibility, and youthful dreams woven through the myth of the founding.

Let me be clear, the way I told the whole experience to myself was very intentional. I
wrote the poem in part so that I could juxtapose the descriptions of tiredness, loneliness and
struggle with language from the myth of founding, in order to create meaning out of an
otherwise unpleasant experience. Experiences like that are painful. And yet, we remember
those times as the happiest. In turn, this kind of remembrance becomes the starting point
for a different way to experience present struggles: as the experience of value-creation, of
growth, not merely as the experience of pain. But of course, pain does not equal growth or
value creation. On the other hand, mere tension-free experience is also not equal to value-
creation. Value is created through the process of human revolution.

As I mentioned above, human revolution has two moments, two aspects creatively
integrated: awareness of the interconnectedness of all life and self-mastery. When we undergo struggles, tension permeates our experience and we reach out to the world in an attempt to reestablish harmony with the environment. I came to SUA with idealistic motivations; I was discontent with the injustices plaguing my native Latin America and I wanted to do something about it, I wanted to become the kind of person who could do something about it. The tension of discontent was met with an imaginative response that could existentially restore harmony in my life: the idea of overcoming a sense of impotence by improving myself. Then at SUA I came in direct contact with the reality I had imagined: I was here learning. However, it was not like I had imagined it; I was awkward, weak, selfish and lazy. The pain of staying up until 4 am, tired and sick, was the incarnation of all my weaknesses; but these are weaknesses that I revealed through my efforts to expand the horizons of my life. The tension of suffering without an active, creative response is merely destructive. The tension of constantly engaging the world searching for meaning and value in experience while at the same time facing one’s weaknesses and gradually transforming them, is a creative tension. I remember those struggles with a warm feeling in my heart because they were not merely experiences of pain; they were also experiences of growth. The two moments of human revolution, gradually gaining awareness of the interconnectedness of all life in actual experience and exercising self-mastery to overcome the weaknesses that are revealed in the process, are integrated in that space of creative tension. A commitment to that process, I believe, is the basic orientation towards the world embodied by the global citizen.

Human revolution constitutes a genuine and creative engagement with the world, precisely because the nature of the world is the interconnectedness of all life, but also because the nature of the world is one of constant flux. We live in an ever-changing world, thus our modes of inhabiting the world ought to be flexible and responsive to the dynamics of ever shifting values. Ikeda writes: “all things are in a constant state of flux; nothing in the universe remains the same, but everything shifts from instant to instant like the current of a mighty river…clinging fast to the illusion of permanence causes the sufferings of the human spirit” (NH, 121). In Ikeda, the ideal of the global citizen is the crystallization of an ethical vision as a response to an ever-changing, interconnected world. It is based on a commitment to the principle that because all life is interconnected, a transformation that a single individual makes in his or her life affects change in the world. Conversely, it is by means of becoming aware of this interconnectedness that the spiritual and moral struggles of our individual lives gain renewed meaning. Self-transformation is the basis of social change and taking responsibility for the world becomes the driving force for self-transformation. Education is what integrates these two moments creatively. Precisely because impermanence is the nature of the world, the response must be educative, and it must be value-creative.

Social Justice

In “Cradle of World Citizens,” Ikeda lists four points for a philosophy of global citizenship: 1) respect for the sanctity of life; 2) respect for cultural difference; 3) remembering the people; and 4) achieving democracy (YPS, 174-180). Point (1) can be interpreted as a variation of the first principle in “Education Toward Global Citizenship:” “the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living” (since life’s sanctity is grounded on the oneness of life expressed as full interconnectedness). Point (2) is clearly a slightly varied restatement of the second principle of the earlier articulation: “the courage not to fear or deny difference.” Point (3) is connected to the third principle of the earlier
articulation: “the compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy” (SE, 100-101). It is interesting that point (4), the clear development from the first articulation, makes reference to democracy. I will take this as a starting point to discuss some of the implications of my reading of Ikeda’s cosmopolitanism for social justice.

In “The Cradle of World Citizenship,” Ikeda characterizes democracy as “a way of life whose purpose is to enable people to achieve spiritual autonomy, live in mutual respect and enjoy happiness” (YPS, 180). The three ethical and moral goods that Ikeda lists here, spiritual autonomy, mutual respect and happiness, are, within the context of Ikeda’s philosophy, goods that come as the result of the process of human revolution. A just society is a society in which material, spiritual, intellectual and social resources are put to the service of securing and expanding conditions that enable the process of human revolution. Ikeda writes: “[Democracy] can also be understood as an expression of human wisdom deployed toward the goal of harmonious coexistence” (YPS, 180). In this sense, we could say that democracy as a way of associated living entails social justice.

Earlier I introduced the discipline of interconnectedness, which is the fact that the process of gradually attaining awareness of the interconnectedness of all life and the process of gradually gaining mastery over oneself are fully integrated in what Ikeda calls human revolution. This principle elucidates the fact that human revolution is social in nature. Wisdom and strength come from our compassionate engagement with others. Growth is never a matter of a single individual. The quality of our social interactions is what makes the difference between merely existing in this world and engaging fully with the world. I think that in the context of Ikeda’s philosophy of education, the function of the mentor and disciple relationship is to reveal the educative power that is inherently potential in any social relation. By means of “intense human interaction engaging the entire personality” we engage the world in ways that reveal the discipline of interconnectedness and open up spaces of creative tension for human revolution. That is why the establishment of communities dedicated to the advancement of human revolution is the way to establish social justice. This applies especially to the case of communities of learning like this institution.

Social justice is a regulative idea. As such, it cannot be fully achieved, but it provides guidance for action, it provides a picture of an ideal to be pursued. The picture of a just society as one devoted to securing and expanding conditions that enable the process of human revolution will not be tension-free; it will not be the picture of a harmonious heaven on earth, for there no growth would be possible. Social justice based on human revolution signifies a condition of creative tension within the oneness of life and environment. Value creation is the reconstitution of creativity in the irreducible reality of tension (evil and loss are part of reality, but so is good and creativity). What characterizes the global citizen is hope in the possibility of creating value and maintaining creative tension. The global citizen is the one who is constantly expanding her horizons with the tenacity and hope that whatever she encounters, in virtue that if it is there to be encountered, it is of this world and it is something with which a relationship of creative tension can be established, value can be created. Life lived that way is a life of constant transformation, for value must be constantly renewed and sometimes radically changed. This is also a life that has the human being at its center, because the world is not determined as something fixed on preceding experience, but as the world of the human being that encounters her environment.

This is the vision that Ikeda has of the good life. It is an educative vision of life, for creative tension is the tension of growth, of learning. This is what he sees as the end of life, and this is what he means when he agrees with Robert Thurman that education is the purpose of human life, and that society must serve the needs of education (SE, 70). Social
justice takes place when a society enables this kind of life of human revolution and ultimately when education is embraced as the end of society.

Our Responsibility

David Hansen (2008) reminds us about cosmopolitanism that “with few exceptions...scholars across the disciplines who have examined the cosmopolitan have yet to come to grips with its educational significance”(1). Ikeda’s contribution to a theory of cosmopolitan education constitutes merely a starting point and much work remains to be done. SUA is an experiment in cosmopolitan education that has the potential to embody an ideal and offer a vision of the educational significance of cosmopolitanism. But it can only do that if as an experiment it succeeds. The measure of its success, I believe, ought to be determined in terms of its capacity to produce value creative individuals committed to engage the world educationally, as lifelong learners and as contributors to their respective communities. As students and graduates, our conduct itself, the way we chose to lead our lives every day, can be, or must be, or perhaps even is the most eloquent expression of a philosophy of cosmopolitan education. Let us accept this responsibility seriously, and proudly, but also with grace and joy.
Cited Works


Establishing Social Justice through Education for Women: Evidence from Self-Help Groups in India

Kajal Gulati

Class of 2006

A university should exist for those who are unable to attend university. “Who is a university for?” “What is the purpose of learning?”—we must never lose sight of these fundamental questions.


Soka or “value-creating” Education’s core philosophy rests upon the happiness of the learner. Founded on this educational philosophy are Soka schools, from kindergarten to university, in many different countries around the world. Yet research on understanding the implications of Soka Education outside the traditional boundaries of academia has been limited. This paper aims to understand some key lessons that can be drawn from Soka Educational pedagogy in achieving social justice outside a traditional school system. As an alumna from Soka University of America, this topic
has been of interest to me as we work in different spheres of society in hopes of continuing Soka’s legacy of value-creating education. Through this paper, I would like to share some of my thoughts on taking forward Soka Educational values beyond and after our Soka school/university experience, and I discuss Soka Education in the context of achieving social justice outside the classroom.

Broadly speaking, one of the generally agreed upon goals of education is social justice, which implies achieving the goals that overall lead to betterment of people or certain groups of people that may have experienced or experiencing backward or abusive customs (Reddy and Manak, 2005). Consequently, it also entails extending the freedom of opportunity to certain groups of people or society, who may benefit from such choices and may not have had a chance to previously access them. I discuss social justice in this paper through the education of women participating in self-help groups (SHG) and their empowerment. Self-help groups are small groups of women organized to receive loans or micro-credit, which they may invest in small enterprises or use domestically. While the group functions primarily as an economic unit, the process of being in a group brings about a sense of confidence and empowerment amongst these women. I use self-help groups as a case study to discuss how tenets from Soka Education can be used in such practical contexts to achieve goals of social justice. In other words, what are the implications of Soka Education system in the context of achieving social and civil justice goals?

The paper is organized as follows. First, a brief conceptual framework connecting Soka education and social justice, both inside and outside the academia, is discussed. A case study of self-help groups to relate education and social justice is presented. Empirical evidence measuring social empowerment through various indicators is also presented. Next, the paper extrapolates reasons of success of self-help groups and commonalities with the Soka education system. Key aspects from Soka education for achieving social justice and taking Soka Education outside the academia are discussed in detail.

**Conceptual framework: Education and social justice**

Current thinking about social justice in the classroom is based on both direct and indirect methods. Whereas knowledge about different concepts of social justice can be directly imparted to students, such as fairness and equity based on gender, race, and sexual orientation, these concepts are also manifested through teacher-student interactions. While I do not intend to go in much detail about the education-social justice framework within the classroom, the education-social justice model outside the classroom very much revolves around similar concepts.

![Conceptual Framework](image-url)
There are several differences and similarities that I should mention between the inside and outside classroom framework. The first point of difference arises from the fact that outside the academia, instead of imparting knowledge about social justice concepts, the teacher (or as the case may be) may directly target these specific groups of people, such as a religious group or a group of women. The second difference is that the teacher may not necessarily “teach” the student. The purpose of the project could be economic, political, or social. In other words, the goal of social justice may be intrinsic or extrinsic to the process, and in some cases, intended or unintended. Finally, the difference is that unlike traditional academia, there may not be a well-defined teacher or a student. The teacher may take upon the role of a student and vice versa.

The similarities in the framework stem from the fact that in both cases, social justice is achieved through an impact on the recipient. Second, social justice achieved through the direct relationship between the student-teacher is similar to the objective of social justice achieved through the process or project implemented. And third, it is becoming increasingly important that the values of social justice are adopted both within and outside the academia as widely promoted goals important to society.

*Case study: Self-help groups in India*

As a practical model of the conceptual framework described above, I discuss the case of self-help groups in India. Self-help groups are small women groups consisting of five to twenty members, who work as microcredit, small-scale business groups. Each group generally elects a leader and a deputy leader to oversee the working of the group. The group members are mandated to make a fixed monetary contribution to the group on a regular basis. The beginning deposit amount is generally small, ranging anywhere between Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 (approximately 20 to 40 U.S. cents) per person. Thus, on average, a group of ten manages to collect Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 (approximately $2 - $4) per month. These savings are then deposited in a savings bank account by the consent of all the members. This process is repeated for a certain time period as decided by the group. Inter-loans are then made out to individual members from the savings accumulated by the group members. These loans are generally small and the repayment periods usually range anywhere between three to six months. After a short regular repayment period, the bank decides to give a loan to the SHG. Since the inception of these groups in India in 1980s, this model has gained significant importance in promoting access to rural credit to the poor. In fact, studies show that the self-help group program has grown as the largest microfinance network in the world. Seen from this perspective, the economic impact of the program has been significant.

However, it is crucial to analyze the impact of these self-help groups beyond their economic influence. Development is meaningful only when these economic opportunities can lead to a greater degree of social, political, and economic freedom for the poor. Therefore, the real question to ask is how effective were these self-help groups in empowering the rural poor, especially women? Did the increased access to credit lead the rural women to have greater equality, higher levels of participation in economic decision-making, and an elevated sense of confidence? Simply put, was this microfinance model successful in socially empowering its members?
The first step in assessing the micro-impact of self-help groups is to understand the composition of these groups. 90 percent of these self-help groups comprise of women (Chakrabarti, 2004). An influential study conducted by NABARD assessing the impact of self-help groups on women empowerment showed that women who had belonged to self-help groups for long periods had a higher confidence level in dealing with people and institutions. These women had an increased awareness about health and hygiene. About 95 percent of the women interviewed in the study said that “control over their own lives had improved” and “they themselves decided on the matters pertaining to general welfare of the family” (MYRADA, 2002). These members also had newer professional and technical skills, which had an additional social benefit of helping their family members. The husbands and other family members of these women were also supportive of their wives’ participation in self-help programs.

A relatively recent study by Deininger and Liu (2008) also suggests that the SHGs have increased the proportion of women who are able to save money for themselves by 16 percent. Moreover, depending on the indicator, about 5 and 11 percent more women have greater freedom to participate in other economic and social activities. In another study in Bangladesh, self-help groups formed by Grameen Bank and BRAC, the two largest non-government organizations in Bangladesh, found that these lending programs have led to a reduction in domestic violence, allowed women to overcome gender barriers, and increase their control over assets. Thus, even though the effect on their income may be marginal, the social impact on these women is significant (Hashemi et. al., 1996).

In order to test the determinants that effectively raise SHG members’ income, Datta and Raman conducted a study in 2001 with a sample of thirty SHGs from eight clusters in the Tirupati area in Andhra Pradesh. The results from the econometric analysis they conducted lead to some interesting insights:

**Table 1: Regression Estimates: Dependent Variable - SHG NET INCOME PER MEMBER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Estimates</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-384.1213</td>
<td>-1.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average distance among members in the SHGs</td>
<td>1.059</td>
<td>2.725*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources generated from outside the SHGs</td>
<td>-0.111</td>
<td>-3.632*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average education of members in the SHGs</td>
<td>318.113</td>
<td>1.974*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan provided in the current year</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>3.621*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of expenditure in total income</td>
<td>8.895</td>
<td>-3.554**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of SHGs</td>
<td>43.229</td>
<td>1.551</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Indicates coefficient is significant at 5 percent level of one-tailed test  
** Indicates coefficient is significant at 10 percent level of one-tailed test

The table above shows the various factors that were included in the regression model for determining the SHG net income per member. The study found that the average education of SHG
members had the highest significant impact on raising the member’s net income. This correlation is crucial because it helps explain the role of raising the skill-set and human capital level of the individual members in order to enhance their productivity and incomes. In fact, the development of entrepreneurial and communication skills has gained even greater importance now as the funds from microfinance institutions have become more readily available. Thus, investment in education of these women has led to the highest economic as well as social benefit.

Discussion: Soka Education Outside Academia

The case study discussed above provides an example of linking education and empowerment of women outside the boundaries of academia. The evidence suggests that through informal modes of education, training, and human capital investments, these women have been able to learn useful skills, which have in turn, led to their empowerment at household and societal level. I chose this self-help group model because it allows us to draw parallels with the Soka Educational pedagogy and understand common chains of thought for translating Soka Education outside the traditional institutional boundaries. I would like to draw attention to four specific elements in Soka Education pedagogy that can be extended in other developmental contexts for achieving social justice goals.

The first aspect is that the training or education imparted for achieving goals of social justice is practical. Members of self-help groups were given many kinds of practical trainings, from simple financial training such as keeping record of their savings and deposits or signing their name to vocational skills like weaving crafts or agricultural vermi-composting. As the women learned these skills, they also gained a sense of confidence as an individual, which eventually led to their empowerment. This methodological aspect of the program is very similar to Makiguchi’s proposition about having a half-day school system, “in which students come to school for half the day and learn practical skills in the community and at home the other half” (SESRP Website). This has stemmed from Makiguchi’s core belief that “we cannot regard "learning as a preparation for living, but enable people to learn in the process of living,” and any education of the individual must be rooted in working at the societal level (Makiguchi Website). While in a traditional school setting, this could imply having practical experiences such as internships or study abroad; in other contexts, this approach could be extended to making education practical and skill-based.

The second core element that can be extracted from the SHG model is the need for a demand-driven education system – an education that serves the local needs and the student themselves. While identifying the exact need of SHG groups remains a core challenge for the implementing organizations, the diverse nature of activities implemented by SHG groups is one of the reasons for success. In one village itself, different SHG groups could be involved in a variety of activities. Moreover, these activities are based on the capacity, educational level, and rural contexts in which these SHGs operate. SHGs close to towns may be involved in small crafts or even in running computer centers, whereas others may be involved in vermi-composting or harvesting. Again, this aspect can be traced back to Soka Education’s strong emphasis on learning for the “happiness” of the individual, based on Makiguchi’s assertion that “education was about the happiness of the children; it was a means by which children could open their minds and interact creatively with their
environment, rather than serving as a tool to mold a docile and obedient population” (Makiguchi Website). He further argued that the goals of education must be in accord with the individual and society, and hence the need for a student-centered and demand-driven education system.

Third, I would like to discuss the cooperative aspect of the SHG model. The fundamental economics of the group is based on the assumption that even though as an individual, these women are not considered credit-worthy due to lack of assets for collateral, as a collective group, they can diversify the risk of default, and thereby re-pay the loans. Thus, working smoothly as a group is given much importance at the early stages of forming SHG groups. Developing trust amongst each other as well as the implementing organization, setting group rules and meeting times, and resolving conflicts should they arise from the key to success of these groups. In several cases, SHG groups have not been able to function well as a group, and hence, have not been able to benefit from the opportunities presented by these groups. Another aspect is the right size of these groups so that every individual member has a role to play and is not neglected in the group. The cooperative aspect of the group reverberates with the inter-linkages between an individual and society that Makiguchi emphasizes. According to him, the concept of “happiness” is not solely personal, and entails “cooperative and contributive existence within society” (Gebert and Joffee, 2007).

The last programmatic aspect that I want to emphasize is the role of teachers as facilitators. In the Soka philosophy of education, Makiguchi encouraged teachers to “assume the role of assisting and supporting the activities of the learner as a helper, guide or midwife” (Makiguchi Website). The facilitators of self-help groups, who are mostly individuals from non-governmental organizations, urge the group members to build their own group management skills, make their group rules, and manage their financial accounts. Their role as facilitators is to ensure the smooth functioning of the group and, ultimately, to make the group self-sustainable.

**Conclusion**

The previous section outlined four elements that I believe are crucial for extending Soka Education outside the academia in order to achieve the goals of social justice. While the first two, education being practical and demand-driven, focus more on the content of education imparted, the other two – cooperative aspect of groups and role of teachers as facilitators – describe the characteristics of the learner and the teacher. These were meant as guidelines for implementing other projects, perhaps those related to development contexts. It would be interesting to see these elements included in other projects and test whether they do, in fact, meet the goals of social justice. I wrote this paper with the intention that it would be useful to my work in international development. Moreover, as a student of Soka Education, I have constantly tried to seek lessons that I can use after my four years of education at Soka University of America. I hope that as current, former, and future students of Soka Education, we can think about translating our education and Soka Educational pedagogy, as a whole, in our daily work, as we step in society and intend to lead contributive lives.
References


Soka Education for Laws: Choosing Process over Frame. An Ode to Abandon Fear and Accept the Universe

Jean Marcus Silva

Class of 2011

Humanity urges a set of regulations that vindicate our way of living, from the "eye for an eye" of the code of Hammurabi¹ to the tablets of the laws of God brought by Moses², and passing through to the revolution of fear and virtue of Robespierre³ and Marx's theories of the control of resources⁴ (Marx 1992). We aspire to acquire certain rules that will prevent social interactions from leaning

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toward chaos and anarchy. In fact, it is this fear of the unknown, materialized by the ideals of the nihilism and anarchism, which allowed operations such as Hobbes' social contract, as in the waving of certain rights to guarantee order and society\(^5\) (Hobbes 2009). Remarkably, such searches for society and laws always developed a certain style, and were very connected to past actions as barometers of the amount of pressure that could be sustained in each individual to maintain their societies. Better said, the past would establish what regulations should vindicate our lives. Laws were always arguing retroactively. A specific point in the past would define throughout the future the essence of moral actions of men. Each significant past moment would transform the entirety of time after agreed on/upon by men as the moral compass for any given subject.

But the reality we live in does not crystallize its past, nor is the future a certainty of events. No wonder physics and math venture so much further in understanding reality, because our expectations on how things are never match how they behave. It might be that we never found, or may never find, the "logarithm" that governs reality; the biggest impression we have is that reality, despite some general rules that might exist, is completely contingent. My favorite explanation for contingency is that "what it is, it might have been different." So can we cope with laws, when they clearly ignore the contingency of reality? How could a fixed law guarantee moral decisions in a constantly changing world? I would say it is quite inelegant to do so; therefore there should be an alternative that could follow the contingency of the world in the maintenance of morality. I say that Soka Education, in its constant struggle for human development and happiness above all is the solution for a more maleable moral compass.

**Frames**

In any modern academic work it is required of any student or scholar to have a framework, past work that will corroborate with new, or paradoxical, findings, as we legitimize our works with respectable elders in our fields. I believe this technique could be dissected into several functions that make it so widely accepted:

1. *the safe ground that the framework guarantee for a paper is.* This is similar to what a safe port did for explorer of the 16th century. The advancement towards the unknown in any field is fatal without the local knowledge.
2. *the acknowledgement of the past.* The past doings cannot die in a void, therefore we make sure we support them. That is how we still know the works of Heraclitus, as his remaining fragments are from quotation of other people.
3. *the limitation of a certain area of action.* This way we can analyze the given situation in more detail, as compared to trying to place it in the essence of reality, or any big assumption about reality, and probably resulting in failure.

To work with a framework is to focus just on one aspect of reality so that it is easier to perceive minimal details that probably would get lost in generalities, and to guarantee we do not

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waste time in a subject that someone might have talked about in the past. Some might wonder why we are now investigating frameworks when I began by talking about laws – frameworks are in fact very similar to laws. But there are some assumptions here; the assumption that any given knowledge can be found and that there is a common past we live in. Both of these assumptions are very dangerous if forgotten, but we accept them because of our fear of the unknown, or of what cannot be controlled.

**Fear**

I would have trouble explaining why we fear the unknown. Many would say it is genetic, reminiscent of our prehistoric trouble without fire in and being easy prey for bigger animals. Regardless of what it is, we definitely live by fear of what we cannot describe – control and transformation. I could list several events on Earth that were representative of this fear, from the burning of ”witches” to the development of better weaponry, but it is most interesting to notice that this fear in the main factor for everything we have done in terms of society. Coming back to Robespierre, it is not surprising that his entire method of revolution was based on terror; so people would be kept on their toes. But this "to be kept on one's toes" was not new to mankind as any given regulation; the concept of an "eye for an eye" for instance, is based on the fear of something happening to you in retaliation. In the end, laws and frameworks or anything that is based on a specific event of the past is no more than just the fear of retaliation; being unknown is the most horrid retaliation in existence, because it is impossible to know what this retaliation will be.

Whether or not it is paranoid of me to understand that this system was made by people in power is irrelevant. We see laws like the Patriotic Act being widely accepted by the people of the United States of America, in their complete waiving of their privacy for better security from unknown abroad "evil" terrorist forces. In fact, these abroad forces are not terrorists; they are genocidal. Who really plays with terrorism are the governments who use such threats as a way of gaining more power, increasing legitimacy with the social contract.

These are social implications, though, of laws and framework, which could easily fall under the category of contingency; something that I am trying place on table as the problem. So I will venture in different forms of seeing the laws; before I can propose any given solution for our problem.

**Fixed**

Considering that laws are based on fixed points in the past as "reference" towards future analyses of events is to understand that time and life and reality "crystallize" in the moment they happen and distance from us toward the infinite void of the preterit. This attitude ignores the fact that the past is part of the memory of each person, and the "documents" about the past are merely fiction of those memories. Even a photograph is a perception created by that memory; because when we look at a given picture we create mental operations that are not connected to the real event. This problem is an old epistemological dilemma. Do we live anything besides our own consciousness?

Better yet, as the epistemological understanding of reality is fragile, we should find, or develop, a moral direction that overpasses this problem. Our understanding of virtues in actions should not be based in "objective" reality or time. When we set a written statement based on the
past as a regulation for our lives in the future, what we are really doing is setting a fixed placed in the past, that could or could not happen again. It is a completely arbitrary and contingent event; how can this be a moral compass? The eternal problem of these written laws is that it can only describe a given moment; or a specific group or even a specific problem: it is unjust in its conception when it ignores the entirety of society. Or to state in simpler words; it is the problem of democracy as the government of the majority; not of the whole. For this system can work, we need to account to the utter contingency of the entire empirical reality.

**Process**

So before establishing any laws of time and space, which I consider quite complicated to jump in so fast, why don't we establish regulations that can be more aligned with what we can really say about reality? And coming back to Descartes on that question matter: ergo cogito sum and the Method: two tools that we clearly distinguish and account in our individual and group lives. "Think therefore I am" to establish that we indeed exist and our internal consciousness is accountable; a common ground for any discussion of any Realm. But most importantly the Method; a tool to describe reality according to our own perceptions of it. Method it is not just an individualization of the explanations of the world, but it is the usage of intuition, or categorical imperatives like Kant like to describe, to ascribe our cogito to the world. No past event is ignored but it is placed in context to our own perceptions. And that is the problem with frameworks; the elimination of certain contexts for the praise of other contexts. But the Method establishes the only possibly knowledgeable context which is the cogito. Your process as an individual remarks the world you live in.

*Soka Education Instead of Written Fixed Laws*

I would comfortably say that the concept of individual project as a way to regulate our actions was what Makiguchi had in mind when he thought of Soka Education. The learning process of children, not the knowledge outside of context, and their happiness, or the Method, would create individuals capable of a societal life. Giving written statement as law would not take into account the context of people's lives, but Soka Education would let individuals take account for themselves in their own contexts, and their own understanding of their own context would be the common ground for everyone who can account for context. Go ahead and read that last sentence again. What Soka Education provides to an individual is a moving picture as a moral direction; a true compass as it changes regarding the situation each of us encounters in life. Regulating the society would be guaranteeing that everyone is being educated in a way to account their own process and context.

*Weak*

I know this argumentation sounds weak or not academic whatsoever: I will say that this was my intention at first because it would be quite intriguing to use academic techniques to deny academic techniques. It is an abrupt ending to a fairly simple idea about laws. But my last reflections on the subject will remark on the power of Soka Education: it is fairly simple as the idea that I am proposing here. As long we don't abandon our fear for the unknown we will always have the troubles of believing things are eternal and fundamental for life and existence. Soka Education

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accounts for our current development; that’s why it provides a better understanding of what society really is: if society is the entirety of people, then its proprieties should not be different from individuals. If we need to take account of the process of each individual and our own happiness as main factor to our development, so should social justice be designed as being a tool to guarantee people biding together as their development and human revolution. Written laws are scars and resentments of the past, while Soka Education provides the balms for the future.

Let the fear go

As I said in the beginning; mankind urges for laws. I will, urge now, for the abandoning of fear. This essay is an ode and a request for the future to abandon fear.
Social Justice Begins in Kindergarten – Fostering Respect

Rekha Gokhale and Lisa McMillan

Class of 2005

Introduction

“Children are the mirror of society.”

When society is ailing or war torn, children are acting out in the most extreme and unthinkable ways. When society is concerned with building national prosperity and military strength, children are losing all interest in studying math and science in school. When society is blinded by the thirst for momentary pleasure, children are suffering from school violence and depression. A child’s behavior reflects the values of her parents. Therefore, if there is violence, anarchy, corruption in society and social injustice prevails, this reflects that the adults and leaders of society have received very wrong and harmful education. If these harmful methods of education are continued and not remedied we cannot hope for our young to create a future of social justice and harmony. In an article on moral education found in the September 1999 edition of Chuo Koron, Taichi Yamada wrote, ”Our children need more than empty sermons about virtue. As adults, we must somehow demonstrate to them in practice how to live a better life.” In order to have

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any hope of improving modern day education, and bring about a future of peace, we must understand what it is that our children really need.

Aside from their own parents, the most influential adults in any child’s life are their teachers. With 12 years of mandatory education, it is inevitable that children will be influenced, for better or worse, by the people in charge of their education. Therefore it is vital for all educators to understand the great importance of their existence in a child’s life. In regards to the drastic rise of delinquent behavior in youth, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi writes, "Instead of spending enormous sums on the rehabilitation of delinquents, why not try an ounce of prevention and pay a little more attention to the question of teacher influence on children and youth? To merely ignore the great potential for good or bad vested in teachers can only spell disaster for society." Teachers are a child's main and most influential model of what an active member of society should be. Sometimes as young as two years old, children are sent to school and are taught to listen to their teachers and to do as they are told. This is a ritual act of the parents handing over their children to the care of their teacher in trusts that they will help them to become active and contributive members of society. To the children, this is a sign that the role of authority figure in their life is no longer just in their parents, but has come to include their teacher as well. With the encouragement of their parents and with the preexisting idea of a teacher's role, children come to believe that their teachers are wise adults who will guide them in their quest for knowledge and through the trials and tribulations of adolescence. The willingness of children to be led inevitably gives the teacher unprecedented power to steer a child in any which direction. With this kind of power, it is the teacher's responsibility to be the utmost model of not only learning, but also a model of respect, caring, and morality. Teachers and the systems of education in general, must assume responsibility for creating people of good moral character who will contribute to the betterment of society. David L. Norton, Professor of Philosophy at University of Delaware in Newark states, "Education must seek to engender social consciousness and identification with the social good. It should endeavor to cultivate 'the personal character needed by the members of society which will enable them to become creative participants in that society.' Individuation is of vital importance but must be conceived, not egoistically, but in terms of the kind of social contribution each person shall make." In a functional society, or more importantly, in a just society, respect for each individual and the contribution they can make to society is the seed from which justice blooms and it is the responsibility of the teacher to cultivate that seed and bring it to fruition.

As we are discussing about education for social justice today, it would be important to define social justice. We say somebody has been treated unjustly when he/she does not receive the rights deserved by him/her. On some occasions injustice occurs when somebody is, for example, punished for crimes they have not committed. In either case, it is quite clear that “justice” signifies that a person’s just or deserved rights are being fulfilled unto him. Justice is, or at least should be, neither restricted to any particular nation nor people, ethnic

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2 Ibid., 65-66.


nor religious group, nor differ between humans and animals. In fact, animals, plants and other living beings are just as deserving of the essential rights required to survive and thrive. It is universally acknowledged that every human being has the right to ‘food, shelter and clothing,’ the essentials for life. (For animals, a natural sanctuary would be equivalent to a person’s roof over the head.) Every living being desires to survive and thrive; human beings pursue material, physical and spiritual wealth in life to live in dignity. Thus, we can safely say that ‘social justice’ is desired by all living beings, if the concept requires that each being get at least the essentials that allow it to live comfortable and happy lives. Unfortunately, the opening of the 21st century has seen a dramatic opposition to social justice. Whereas in the past, victims of injustice were individuals or minority groups of ethnic, social, cultural, or religious nature, today it has become a nuisance of global proportions. Far from the conditions of justice improving, it appears to have had a downward spiral since the world wars. Today, drawing from some great thinkers, we will present how lack of spiritual and character development in education systems has contributed to a great extent to the continuing deterioration in social justice and the quality of human life. And since theory alone does not make the world go around, we will support our argument with examples of positive reinforcements to education that will naturally restore the dignity of human life and increase the possibility for social justice in the modern world.

Importance of Spiritual Education

Philosophers and thinkers world-wide have noted that while the human civilization has advanced greatly in science and technology, including medicine that cures physical and chemical imbalances, the realm of the psyche has hardly been explored and its potential remains untapped. The founder of Soka University of America, Dr. Daisaku Ikeda writes,

…while we have made great leaps forward in our technological capacity to control and shape the world around us, we have not achieved a correspondingly dramatic expansion of the human spirit. As a result, we end up at the mercy of the very forces we unleashed.  

The twentieth century Indian philosopher and thinker J. Krishnamurti, whose influence spread across India, U.S. and UK in the nineties, similarly stated that the negative and destructive functions in human beings emerge from a fundamental quality of the soul or psyche. In his book, Beyond Violence, Krishnamurti observes that “fear” is the factor that contributes to the confusion, violence and disruption created by man in society. Similar to Dr. Ikeda’s philosophy of human revolution, Krishnamurti discussed in his lectures the importance of causing a rapid change in one’s psychology. “Change in society is of secondary importance; that will come about naturally, inevitably when you as a human being bring about this change in yourself.”

According to Krishnamurti, this transformation or revolution, starting with overcoming fear in human nature would automatically result in the improvement of areas of society such as corruption induced poverty, injustice, illiteracy, violence, and so on. Based on his thinking, educationalists put together a reformed system of education called New Education. New Education emphasizes the development of positive

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7 J. Krishnamurti, Beyond Violence. (Madras, India: Krishnamurti Foundation India, 1997), 35.
psychological traits in students; recognizing that contemporary educational methods (in India and other countries) focus solely on their functional abilities. The evils of society that cause large numbers to suffer, such as corruption, lies, hypocrisy, superstition, radicalism, and war, stem from the basic negative traits in human nature such as greed, anger, prejudice and ignorance. Educated men and women of high status who are leaders in society often lack the good characteristics of an open mind, honesty, trustworthiness, prudence and compassion.

Within living memory, that is, within the past 60-70 years, it has been seen that people of character are getting continuously and rapidly fewer. This is found to be the case in families, in social life, in the field of education, in business and industrial life, amongst employees, in public servants, in professionals like lawyers, doctors, chartered accountants and others, and in politics.8

New Education also believes the corollary to be true. An increase in the number of people of good character with positive traits of human nature such as honesty, trustworthiness, generosity, compassion, loyalty, filial piety, etc. will witness a gradual but sure change in the peace and social justice conditions in society. “When there are more people of character in all walks of life, life is smoother and happier.”9 Nobel prize winning economist Amartya Sen’s argument for the much debated and controversial ‘social choice theory’ similarly states that although a transcendental approach to social justice may not always work in all particular situations, when observed from a relative perspective, if a substantial number of people can benefit from a certain practice that protects their human rights, from a comparative angle this method is definitely closer to achieving social justice than a transcendental theory that remains to be tried. In short, it is better to have relatively more social justice than injustice in the world. Sen also refers to education that fosters correct reasoning or “enlightenment” that will reduce the possibility of “wrong choices” that is the cause for problems in society.

The role of education and enlightenment is central to Condorcet’s approach to society. [He] preceded Malthus in pointing out the possibility of serious overpopulation in the world if the growth rate did not slow down....Condorcet also decided that a more educated society, with social enlightenment, public discussion, and more widespread women’s education, would reduce the population growth rate dramatically and could even halt or reverse it....Today, as Europe struggles with the fear of population contraction rather than explosion, and all over the world evidence accumulates on the dramatic effects of education in general and women’s education in particular in reducing the growth rate of population....10

However, there is a vast difference between individuals capable of self-centered reasoning where choices produce immediate gain but have drastic long term results, and true


9 Ibid., 34.

enlightenment that fosters a socially contributing character. The current economic crisis is a bitter example of capitalist opportunists whose short-sighted reasoning has led to worldwide chaos. Thus, we can see that the two ideals of character building or inner human revolution, and the power of reasoning must be developed in good balance. In this paper we will discuss how education that is mindful of the positive spiritual and psychological development of its students is crucial to bringing a substantial increase in social justice and creating harmony in society.

The Value of Respect

The current mantra of education that presses for almost machine-like perfect engineers, doctors, biogeneticists, physicists, and IT specialists has little to do with neither character building nor critical thinking. And where students have had the opportunity to develop comprehensive understanding through the study of liberal or interdisciplinary subjects, the social norm is such that only people with specialization or appropriate qualification get the fat-salaried jobs. Thus, both the institution of education and the current framework of the job market forces individuals to become mere carbon-copies, producing only recycled material over and over. Having lost their individuality and with no platform to nurture their innate potential, individuals grow more and more depressive or violent and are ruled by the negativities of greed, jealousy and anger. Such sordid competitiveness is the root for the violence, unhappiness and injustice in societies in every part of the world, whether developed or developing. If education does not empower individuals to reach their highest potential and contribute to society, there is little hope for social justice in the 21st century.

As world-renowned Russian mathematician and Moscow State University Rector, Dr. Victor A. Sadovnichy said, “Truly outstanding intellects do not emerge from big classrooms. You have to sit students down next to the teacher and educate them one-to-one. In short, we must not think of schools as buildings, but as something that is formed around the character of the teachers.”

Soka or “value creation” education is a theory that fulfills the criteria for fostering individuals to contribute to a peaceful and just society. Based on our practical application of Makiguchi’s theory “education for the happiness of every child” at the Microcosmos International Preschool and Kindergarten in Tokyo, we determined a method by which teachers can actively and correctly participate in fostering good values, enhancing critical thinking skills and also nurturing the innate potential of every child. We believe that all of the above can be achieved if teachers learn to treat students with respect. It has been our experience that when a teacher acknowledges a child’s individuality, respecting his/her uniqueness, she will gradually teach by example the value of respect, allowing the student to develop into a confident and compassionate adult who will contribute to social justice in the future.

Start Early

The early years of 3-6 are very special, for this is the period in which a child’s personality develops, becoming its character for life. Study topics at the kindergarten level are easier and less time consuming, hence teachers can freely focus on character development at this stage.

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The new-born infant cries, his early days are spent in crying. He is alternately petted and shaken by way of soothing him; sometimes he is threatened, sometimes beaten, to keep him quiet. We do what he wants or we make him do what we want, we submit to his whims or subject him to our own. There is no middle course; he must rule or obey. Thus his earliest ideas are those of tyrant or the slave. He commands before he can speak, he obeys before he can act, and sometimes he is punished for faults before he is aware of them, or rather before they are committed. Thus early are the seeds of evil passions sown in his young heart. At a later day these are attributed to nature, and when we have taken pains to make him bad we lament his badness.12

Fostering a good and balanced character requires a great deal of thoughtfulness and self-reflection on the part of the teacher. Thus, we devised the formula of 'respect;' when respect towards the child as an individual becomes the basis of a teacher’s every action, whether while teaching good values or correcting bad behavior, it will serve as a checkpoint for them to not succumb to conventions or fundamentalism, which is contradictory to the aim of nurturing capable individuals. The necessary ingredient is that the teachers are individuals of integrity, dedicated to the principles of life-long learning and polishing their own lives.

A Teacher’s Responsibility

Respectful Body Language

No self-respecting adult appreciates being looked down upon or talked down to. Whether it is by someone who is older or someone in a higher position, no matter who the offender is, it hurts our feelings and hurts our pride to be treated as though we are not equal. Children are no different. When someone they look up to and expect unconditional love from, such as their teacher, treats them as inferior beings or disrespects them, they get hurt. Indirectly, it teaches them to behave in like manner with those younger to them, lower in status and so on. It is very easy for adults to forget to treat children with respect, and sometimes it is even difficult to realize that we are treating them disrespectfully. Something as simple as allowing a child to be their age is a great sign of respect. Let's look at an example from Microcosmos. Saya is a six year old kindergartener and a very competitive young lady. Whether in class, playing games, or even just in daily life, she is always ready to compete. Saya especially loves to play games with the teachers, such as dodge ball, racing, or other athletic games. Of course, having the competitive nature that she does, she is always playing to win. Because of her passion and spirit, it would be very easy for a teacher to forget that Saya is only six years old. Competitiveness is so ingrained in adults today that even as teachers we can become indignant and be drawn in to defeat the child at her own game. For example, it would be easy to have no mercy in a race and leave Saya in the dust. However, as an adult, holding your athletic prowess and your more matured skills over her head and gloating about the fact that you can beat a six year old girl in a foot race is not a sign of respect. In this case, showing respect to Saya would be giving her a chance to show her skills as a six year old girl, encourage her to try harder and even excel herself. The teacher does not

necessarily have to let her win, but he should keep in mind that his racing partner is so young and maybe try to bring himself to level of a six year old child.

Also due to age difference, it is very natural for a teacher to be physically taller than a student. This could be very intimidating for a student, especially if they are trying to have a conversation with their teacher. As a preschool teacher, with students who were only two years old and very small, teachers at Microcosmos always made it a point to kneel or sit down when a child wanted to talk to her, so they would feel more comfortable confiding in her, rather than being intimidated by the teacher towering over them.

**Respect Their Emotions**

The ultimate respect a teacher can give a student is by joining their world and addressing them at their level, both mentally and physically. Not just during playtime, but also in conversations, during class, and even when correcting a child’s misbehavior. While conversing with a child, teachers at Microcosmos always tried to keep in mind the kind of language used. Of course foul language was never used, but even keeping language to a level respective of a two year old or five year old child is very important. Every morning at Microcosmos, teachers greeted the students by saying, “Good morning! How are you today?” And the typical response was, “I’m happy!” According to the evolution of their responses each morning, we could gauge their growing comfort at Microcosmos as well as their mastery of the English language. Of course, the two year old newbies responded by crying for Mama, but as they became more comfortable with the new school environment and with responding in English, the response evolved to “Happy!”, which grew to “Angry and Happy!”, or “Sleepy!”, as they came to expand their vocabulary regarding emotions. When the children matured a bit more and moved on to the Kindergarten classes, their responses became much more creative. For example, “Today I am super duper fantastic excellent!” and so on and so forth. Big words that would make the child feel inferior in any way are avoided, but rather we tried to inspire their intellect with new and challenging words. This required the teacher to respect the ability of each child and address them accordingly. However, there were days when a child was just not in the mood to be bothered. Sometimes, they wouldn’t even speak to the teachers or they would tell them they are sick or sad, but however they expressed it, they could tell that the child is down. On those days, it is very important that we respect the child’s emotions and not force them to feel a certain way or disregard the emotions that they are rightfully feeling. “Denial is sometimes cloaked in lighthearted comments that rob the child of her autonomous right to feel and to trust her inner voice. When a child says, ‘Yuck, I don’t want it,’ and we reply, ‘Oh, but it’s yummy,’ we invalidate a decision she has made.”  

Such action if repeated over many years will raise a weak and indecisive youth lacking self-respect and always relying on others for self-affirmation. So if a child comes in to school crying and insisting that she does not want to be at school that day, the teacher can’t send her home, but she can respect the child’s emotions and let her make decisions for herself. Sometimes it is as simple as giving the child a hug, telling her that she can sit and watch the class without participating until she feels better. Usually just watching the fun interaction between her friends and the teacher encourages the student to want to participate herself. This teaches the child to rely on her own strength to pick herself up. Other times, the child honestly doesn’t feel well or is sleepy, and usually that

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13 Naomi Aldort, Raising Our Children, Raising Ourselves (Bothell, WA: Book Publishers Network, 2005), 243
child will fall asleep while sitting quietly, a peaceful choice. In either case, the child’s emotions, feelings, and desires should be respected by the teacher, in order to keep the child from feeling pressured or unimportant. On the other hand, if teachers were to forcefully try to make the child “listen” or “obey” then the child would react violently, cry uncontrollably and may even cause injury to others and oneself.

**Respect When Correcting Behavior**

As much as possible, a teacher should not scold a student outright before others. This is not only to spare the child from feelings of embarrassment, but also to not set precedence for others to judge the child for his actions. Supposing there is a boy who is acting restlessly in class, moving about on his chair. Unable to pay attention, he is even distracting others from doing work. A teacher’s natural reaction would be to scold the child or send him to the corner. By doing this, the teacher is alienating the child from the group, and setting precedence for the other children to judge and ridicule him and children of similar restless personality. We believe that even as these students become adults they will do the same to others. But if the teacher can ignore his antics without making him an outcast, say by diverting his attention by asking questions, and if all else fails speak jovially and with compassion when correcting before others, then she will set a very different example for her students to follow. Let us consider the following dialogue:

Teacher: Rounak, are you feeling restless? Why are you moving so much?
Rounak: I’m sorry Teacher.
Teacher: There is no need to be sorry. I can understand, when I was your age I also had trouble sitting still in class. Would you rather do something else? Do you want to play with the building blocks over there?
Rounak: No teacher. I want to stay here.
Teacher: Are you sure? If you want to go play over there I don’t mind. Or would you rather be here with your friends?
Rounak: Yes. I want to be here.
Teacher: Great. Then we can learn together. But can you please try not to be restless and noisy? Otherwise we cannot do this lesson together. Is that alright?
Rounak: Yes.

This form of positive dialogue has taken place several times at Microcosmos and it usually encourages cooperation from the student. In addition, it taught the students observing that if you ask nicely, people will accept what you want. Note, that in the entire conversation no words or phrases were used to degrade or ridicule the misbehaving student. Neither did the teacher show preference to those who were listening obediently. Instead positive words such as “friends” or “together” were employed. The time and energy required to scold (more, if the child had cried and made a scene) was instead used constructively through positive dialogue. It was a creative solution and the teacher didn’t have to sacrifice her class. Also, giving a choice to play or study to the misbehaving student taught the others to be non-judgmental and have mutual respect for different behaviors and desires without labeling them as good or bad. The exact opposite occurs in 99% of the schools, due to which children learn that sitting still and quietly in class is what is most important and good, even more than understanding the subject. Is this not true? We do not say that this means the children are allowed to do whatever they want whenever they please. The arena of
preschool or kindergarten education is special because a couple of lessons can be sacrificed without having a negative effect on the future of the child, but these lessons can be essential in developing positive qualities such as being non-judgmental at an early age. There is nothing fundamentally wrong in a child wanting to play at the time of study. If a child is persistently misbehaving, however, he can be taken aside after class and explained to carefully how his actions prevent the teacher from teaching and make her sad. If there exists a bond of mutual respect between teacher and student (nurtured by the teacher) there is no doubt that after a few instances of such patient explanation, the child will learn to control his behavior during class, while maintaining his self-respect and unique personality otherwise. However, using physical force to persuade a child’s compliance and good behavior will adversely affect the child’s respect for the teacher and possibly for any authority figure throughout his life. Message: Be Strict, But Respectfully!

Respect Their Right to Make Decisions

According to the New Education method, non-directional and non-judgmental questions guide the child to look deeply into his psyche for the solutions of the problem. “The Discussion Leader only asks questions and does not provide answers.”14 When dealing with conflict between two students often it is the teacher who gives the final verdict -- who is right, who is wrong, and what punishment or reward is to be given. Perhaps being adults, it is easy to think that we know all the answers, which is a very dangerous assumption. If we always make the decisions for our children and students, then they will never develop the good characteristics we wish for them to imbibe. Children learn by observation; they absorb everything the adults do in their environment. There is no doubt that a child who has been raised in an environment of tolerance, respect and compassion will make the right decision. Unfortunately, even good teachers too often fail to trust in their own teaching. The teacher’s role is always to guide, not force, children to choose correctly. Developing self-reflection in children is crucial if they are to become socially just adults; teachers must be extremely patient and non-judgmental, controlling their impulse to tell the child what is the right thing to do. In the dialogue with Rounak, the teacher used easy vocabulary as he was between and 3 and 4 years old. With students of age 5 and 6, more complex terms and concepts would be utilized. To have a successful dialogue, teachers must care not to use words beyond the student’s vocabulary capacity. “Questions should be clear and simple and should be such as to stimulate and not so complex or difficult as to discourage. To develop this ability […] he needs both ingenuity and practice.” 15 Practicing positive dialogue with several students will develop the sensitivity and creativity of teachers.

Let us take another example of misbehavior. How does a teacher maintain respectful behavior towards her students while breaking up a fight?

Teacher: What is the problem?
Rounak: He pushed me.
Kapil: Because he won’t play with me.


Teacher: Why won’t you play Rounak?
Rounak: Because he bites and pushes. I don’t like him.
Teacher: Kapil, why did you push him?
Kapil: Because he won’t include me in his games.
Teacher: Rounak says that he doesn’t like that you push him Kapil. Can you stop?
Kapil: Ok.
Teacher: Kapil says he’ll stop. Will you play with him now?
Rounak: No.
Teacher: Ok. That’s alright. (Smiles at both)
Teacher: You can go play with your friends. I’ll play with Kapil. Is that okay Kapil?
We’ll have fun.
Rounak: What are you playing?
Teacher: How about the dinosaur game?
Kapil: Yeah! Teacher can be dinosaur! You have to catch me.
Teacher: Ok, I’ll catch you.
Rounak: I want to play too!
Teacher: Are you sure? Do you want to play with Kapil and me? Will you let me play with you too?
Rounak: Yes you can play with me.
Teacher: How about Kapil? Can he play too?
Rounak: Yes, if he doesn’t push me.
Teacher: Kapil, will you push Rounak? Will you be careful?
Kapil: Yes, I’ll be careful.
Teacher: Good! Then let’s play together!

If children are given the right to choose, and simultaneously made to understand the consequences of their choices, then as they mature they will become gradually more self-reliant and choose to ‘do homework’ or ‘self-study’ by acknowledging their own needs. This belief is corroborated by the Buldana School Experiment in New Education that recorded positive psychological changes such as self-reliance, self-confidence, initiative and sense of responsibility because of Group Discussions with their students.

They discovered that they had more capacity in them to be self-reliant than they had imagined. Those who were known in the past to dislike or dodge homework were found to have become particular about it without goading from anyone. They discovered they had it in them to be able to study on their own.16

We find today a large ratio of young adults lacking in any sense of responsibility. The fundamental cause is in teachers or parents, who command children to act in a responsible manner without explaining why they must do so. This autocratic behavior of adults reflects their lack of respect for children as individuals. At Microcosmos, we emphasized the importance of respect and mutual-understanding in the student-teacher and child-parent relationship. A respectful parent or teacher will surely engrave in her child the value of self-responsibility for one’s actions. Unfortunately, we live in an age where often adults themselves fail to live by such values; it is hardly surprising then that they fail to explain it to

their young. Teachers should therefore fulfill the responsibility of their profession through active self-improvement and leading by example.

Values Fostered From Respect

Self-Respect

As soon as a child enters school, they are shown by the example of their teacher how to present themselves respectfully and how to respectfully interact with others. We believe that the key to justice, the essential element needed to create a just society, is respect. Respect for others and respect for oneself. And the most basic, yet most effective method to teach respect is through example. As the pillar of respect in a classroom and in society, teachers must begin by being examples of self-respect and showing a child how to respect oneself. It is easy to belittle oneself and not even realize that you are doing it. For instance, while speaking in front of the class, a teacher might fumble her words and become frustrated with herself. She can react disrespectfully to herself by calling herself stupid or silly or by otherwise berating herself in front of the students, or she can react respectfully by just saying "Oops! Let's try that again!" or even just by laughing it off and moving on. Students will surely mimic a teacher's reactions to her own follies and showing that even teachers make mistakes can help a child understand that it is okay to not be correct all the time. In the book *Raising Our Children, Raising Ourselves* by parenting and family counselor Naomi Aldort, she stresses the importance of affirming a child's self-image on a daily basis. “Our goal is not to accomplish the impossible task of raising children who never experience a blow to their self-image. Such a life does not exist, and shielding a child from real experiences will only weaken him. Instead, children need to grow up able to face reality with emotional strength and wisdom.”

To understand the effects of a child raised to have indestructible self-respect, let's look at Katie. Katie is a five year old kindergartner at Microcosmos. Despite being raised by a single mother, her uncle and grandparents have all pitched in and created a warm and loving home environment where she lives everyday being affirmed of her self-worth and of the value she brings to this world. She is encouraged to be unique and she is allowed to explore her creativity. In every sense of the word, Katie is respected. Because of this nurturing environment, she has come to have great self-respect and self-love. Unlike most of her classmates, she doesn't worry about doing what the other students do at play time and she doesn't pretend to be "cool" in front of the other kids. Instead, she makes up stories to tell the teachers and draws beautiful artwork to give as presents to her classmates, teachers, or her family. Without any prompting, she will give her friends a hug and tell them she loves them. She has discussions with the teachers about their clothes or jewelry, as she is very interested in fashion and beauty. And she dances freely to the music playing on the boombox or to the music playing in her head. Whereas all of her friends are putting on airs and trying to fit in with the cool kids, Katie is self-assured and does not need to be validated by anyone; therefore she is free to share her love and creativity with anyone who is willing to give her a moment of time. Also, her self-confidence helps to eliminate any learning barriers or confidence issues she may have, and her English skills are far beyond what is expected of a five year old Japanese child. The key to Katie's happiness and self-respect is the respect she has received from the adults in her life. Starting at home, her family treats her with all of the

17 Aldort, 243.
respect that they would treat any adult, but not in a cold or impersonal way. They shower her with love and encourage her to reach her highest potential. The next crucial step is that this same respect and love must carry over into the classroom.

Building a child's self-respect does not entail puffing them up with excessive praise or allowing them to run rampant under the delusion of encouraging independence. Rather, it requires faith in a child's potential to make good decisions and in their basic desire to create value in their environment. Encouraging self-respect means cultivating a child's individuality and imagination, rather than stifling their creativity or attempting to mold them to some non-existent "norm." But, most of all, it requires genuine love and care for each and every child and a strong desire in the teacher for every child's absolute happiness. As Daisaku Ikeda says in his book *Soka Education*, “Educators earnestly seeking their students’ happiness will naturally come to treat them with unconditional trust and warm respect, instead of giving them instruction from on high.”

Respecting Others

On the heels of self-respect comes the most desirable characteristic in individuals—respect for others. A great character accords every individual besides oneself equal respect and affection. Such a person requires enormous amounts of creative energy to maintain respect for others in the face of personal adversity. “The increased activity of a compassionate mind develops firm courage and will power needed to enhance the respect for life…it brings out the creative power needed to deal with the selfishness of others.”

Our ego makes it difficult to respect others' individuality when it contradicts our own perspective of life. Thus, we always find it easier to be in the company of those who share our likes and dislikes and shirk from those unlike or of an opposing character. Dr. Ikeda draws our attention to the Eastern philosophical principle that states that “the root of all suffering lies within the ego.” Our ego alienates us from others. If a great number of people hurt our ego, before we know it we may have isolated ourselves from that many people. Thus, we observe the very elite and egotistic type of intellectuals finding it difficult to socialize (often referred to derogatorily as “nerds”). Their sense of superiority of intellect forms barriers to “true friendship [and] the happiness of warm relations with others.” In contrast, a person of true self-respect, (i.e. easy in his own skin), is not selfish or self-centered. Rather because he/she recognizes their own true worth, they can deeply appreciate the value in all humanity. One who boasts of having self-respect but is condescending towards others is in actuality suffering from superiority or a veiled inferiority complex. Observations of Microcosmos kids showed that there is a fine line between self-respect and self-righteousness or self-centered behavior. Teachers must beware not to nurture overconfidence in their students. For example, it is incorrect to only boost confidence and not admonish a student's negative actions in fear of hurting the child’s self-confidence. The teacher must absolutely trust in the child’s own strength to conquer the bitter medicine of criticism and become stronger.

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21 Ibid., 58.
The Buldana School Experiment in New Education aimed to raise self-confidence and self-reliance in students, however, observed a growth of arrogance in their students post experiment. “…there were four students who seemed to have become arrogant. Even before the experiment, they were known to be slightly so, but the effect of the experiment was to enhance their arrogance.” 22 Some students at Microcosmos similarly became very disobedient and belligerent towards teachers. This is but natural of course. Children from the time of birth are naturally selfish. Only as they grow older do they learn about right and wrong and start to take responsibility for their actions.

Be as broad-minded as possible when taking care of your child and as much as you can allow him or her to grow up free and unfettered, but you have to be very strict about those things which are bad habits, which cause trouble to others and those that undermine physical and psychological health. Another thing is that your method of discipline must always be the same and it should be repetitive.23

If individuals are to be raised to contribute to social justice in the future, it is very important that the tendency to be arrogant and self-righteous is checked at an early age. As Dr. Ikeda points out, strict admonishment must be applied repeatedly, until it is extracted from the root. In short, such method of discipline will teach the child to ‘recognize’ his bad tendency and become autonomous in self-discipline. This is very tricky however. The same form of admonishment cannot be used with every child. Each child is unique. The teacher must understand her students’ emotional make-up before being firm with them. Some students are tough and can take direct criticism, while an introvert might require to be told mildly but repeatedly. There are many students who are naturally sensitive and receptive to others’ feelings. They not only have self-respect but also respect others. Excessive solicitation against arrogance and self-righteousness towards these children will only backfire and make them overly sensitive to others’ opinions. Thus, it is extremely important that the teacher respect each child’s individuality and make the effort to understand her students as thoroughly as possible. Additionally, with respect and the happiness of the child as the goal in mind, the teacher is unlikely to admonish children out of anger or self-righteousness. (However, as teachers are also human, it is natural to lose self-control sometimes.) Children are rarely judgmental or self-righteous, unless they have had precedence in their teachers or parents. As Rousseau wrote in Emile that caprice is a learned vice; it will not develop in children unless teachers or parents create the conditions that nurture capricious behavior.24 Teachers can teach respect for others by first becoming excellent examples themselves. Ninety-nine percent revolves around the manifestation of respect in the teacher-student relationship.

Parents

Although the teacher takes on the role of helping a child to develop her individuality and to create a path for her future, the child's parents do not stop being guides and role

22 Agashe, 61-62.
23 Ikeda, The Creative Family, 75.
24 Rousseau
models for the child as well. In fact, education begins in the home, as soon as the child is born. “A newly-born child is like a white canvas still untouched by the artist’s oils. What is drawn upon this tabula rasa will determine the framework of the child’s personality. The mother must do this sketch… This sketch so skillfully drawn by the mother’s hand will later be filled in by the child’s own hand with a whole range of colors during youth and adolescence.”25 Starting with the guidance and example of the mother, a child continues to develop her individuality throughout her adolescence. When she begins schooling, her teacher will be the person to present the world to her and show her the options of how she can live in this world. When the child is presented with these options, whether she shrinks back in fear or leaps forward with courage, will depend on the examples she was shown as an infant or young child. Because the child has looked to her parents for all of the right answers before, once she begins schooling, everything the teacher shows her and teaches her, the child will look to her parents for validation of all of it. A child’s education thus is a shared responsibility, with the parents and the teacher having equal influence. However, parents nowadays are pressured by erroneous but popular ideas and they tend to force-feed children to live up to society’s expectations. Parents do not care if their child is growing up to be a capable individual of character, and instead become obsessed with grades and awards. They pressure teachers to tailor their teaching methods to produce tangible results rather than focus on the character building of students. At Microcosmos, teachers tried to balance praise with positive criticism when apt, but some children would get excessively annoyed or hurt when admonished. It appears this was because everyday these children made painstaking efforts to improve upon their mistakes and perfect themselves to please their parents.

We were surprised to find such perfectionism in children so young. It was natural they could not take the pressure of added criticism. Meanwhile, these children tended to look down on others who were less perfect. Today’s society perpetuates such competitive arrogance in young minds, unconsciously nurturing the roots of social injustice. But, the formula for happiness and living well does not equate to studying hard in school, cramming for standardized tests and then becoming rich and successful. In fact, the modern method of force-feeding education that is thought to be necessary to lead to success, is what is degrading the institution of education to what could become a point of no return. Makiguchi gives an example of the effects of force feeding education.

The detrimental effects of force-feeding a small child can be easily seen because of the small body’s inability to metabolize more than it can digest. The excessive bulk passes through the child's system, an undigested waste. Or worse, it may lodge in the digestive tract, slowly putrefying and poisoning the whole system. Unfortunately, the effects of psychological toxification in children caused by the forced learning of masses of unintelligible information are not immediately visible. Consequently, the detrimental effects of this poisoning process in children’s lives are not recognized. The situation is serious, but when we search for the causes of the problem, we are faced with the paradox that teachers and parents alike see themselves as providing for the future well-being of the children even though they make them miserable in the process.26

26 Makiguchi, Education for Creative Living, 21.
To avoid poisoning the child psychologically, it is vitally important and the responsibility of the parent-teacher team, to assure that the child is not being force fed, but rather nurtured and encouraged. Being united, as a parent-teacher team, for the common goal of the child’s happiness and well-being will bring about the best results, which is the splendid growth of the child and their present and future happiness. “Happiness in Makiguchi’s meaning is the subjective reward of living well, and to live well for a human being is necessarily to develop in personal character, because for all of us in the beginning (as infants and young children), what is good in us subsists as unactualized potentiality.”27 In fact, teachers must try their best to inculcate in their students, love, respect and gratitude for their parents. This can be achieved through meaningful and direct dialogue with children; for example, a teacher can remind her student how noble her mother is to cook delicious meals for her everyday, or how wonderful her father is to work hard and earn money, so she can have new toys and good clothes. Teachers should not patronize but appeal to the child’s natural understanding of gratitude and love for her parents. Founder Ikeda, says strictly that if people who do not respect their parents are placed in positions of power, they are likely to cause great suffering to others and themselves. On the other hand, “he who serves his parents, in a high station will be free from pride; in a low situation, will be free from insubordination; and, among his equals, will not be quarrelsome.”28

“Equality”-- Respect for Every Profession

A large number of people that we call educated are only good for computer-like processing of information. With each generation, the model gets faster and sleeker, with higher memory speed and greater storage capacity, for what is essentially the same thing—information processing. Just like computers, we have lost our ability to invent, to analyze information and discover the truths of life and nature. And even if there are those who wish to seek the truth, they lack the spiritual and mental strength of the great figures of the past. What is the real problem then? The real problem is society’s erroneous values today that preach that a prestigious education as a means to a fat salaried job is what is most important to become happy, rather than the pursuit of truth. In addition, there is a rapid social breakdown where any profession outside that of doctors, engineers or bio-chemists is considered to be below dignity, and therefore undesirable. Consider 1.3 billion men and women all turning into doctors or engineers. That is what the society and social norm is feeding to us everyday. Who would grow rice then? Who would build our houses? Who would make our clothes? If other professions outside of the ones mentioned above were so useless and unwanted, then why would we need a Brahmin or Mozart to relieve our stress, or a Monet and Van Gough to recall the harmony of nature and relieve us from our predominantly artificial environment? Social injustice is deeply rooted in the present social views that lack respect for all kinds of professions and stations in life. How different is this

from the caste systems of old? Fundamentally, the problem remains the same; it just has a different name now.

Class divisions came about as a result of competition between nations, tribes, and ethnic groups. These class lines and divisions tend to be extinguished as the people of a society become capable of clear and objective thinking. Clear thinking people realize that every function is necessary and that there should be no discrimination based on ideas of “high” or “low.” That is what is meant when present civilized countries proclaim that “all people are equal.”

We may get away with earning astronomical amounts of money and gather worldwide fame, but in this short-sighted self-centered social view, we can only bring a world of great destruction to our children and the future of our children’s children. It is important that we do not take lightly these clichés in life – they are clichés only because they are profound and not easily understood. But that does not make them untrue. If we are to hope for any form of improvement in society we have to seriously consider revising our own values and teaching the value of respect for all professions to our children. Teachers can play a great role in this type of instruction by involving their students in field activities, such as visiting a flour mill or spending a day farming. At Microcosmos, students were encouraged to clean their classrooms, wipe-down windows, wash stains off floors, all while listening to music. This joint activity was extremely enjoyed by the students and instilled in them the joy of doing such simple chores, simultaneously appreciating the hard work and effort required. Such activity often repeated would intrinsically foster respect in the students for the housekeeping profession. Similarly, given the financial limits of the school, observing carpentry, a blacksmith’s workshop, a publishing house, or countless other areas, can teach children to recognize and respect the hard work of individuals in any profession. Teachers must make it a point to explain and help a student understand how much effort is required in printing one newspaper for example, that arrives easily at your doorstep everyday. Reporters find and write articles, editors edit, the layout team organizes pictures and written material, the photographers have to take appropriate photos, the printers have to print, the paper providers have to supply paper by processing it from wood cut down by the lumberjacks, the printed paper then has to be distributed to every distributing house and finally the young boy who wakes up early every morning to collect and then deliver the paper to our doorstep, before we wake up and step out onto the porch to pick it up. Inquisitive young minds would more than likely become very excited to know the processes of labor behind their everyday life, and it may even open up their eyes to something they may like to pursue in the future.

Respect for the Environment

In the same vein, interaction with nature can develop individuals with an inner sense of responsibility and care for the environment. I, Rekha, have personally studied at Sahyadri school, a J. Krishnamurti foundation from the 7th to 10th grade in India. Over the four years at Sahyadri, the students were involved in numerous Environment Service (EVS) activities, such as planting saplings, composting, and campus cleaning. Several alumni from

Sahyadri, including myself, relate how these repeated activities ingrained in us a respectful attitude towards plants and trained us to keep the environment clean. So much so that when I walk down a street and find empty Coke cans and litter, I automatically bend over to pick it up, and carry it in my personal vinyl bag till I find a trash can to dispose it. One day when we were walking to the park, my students observed me picking up trash off the street and inquired why I was doing it. I replied that I find this street with the grove of trees very beautiful and don’t want garbage to ruin its beauty. This inspired the students very much and they insisted on cleaning the street themselves. Sure enough, the next time we went to the park the children carried their own vinyl bags and collected garbage that ruined the street’s beauty. Of course, we also discussed the unhygienic nature of such action and each student washed their hands before resuming play. Thus, we realized how important it is for teachers to encourage love and respect for the environment and even non-living things such as books, food and personal items at an early age. Instilling respect for the environment allows children to grow up as individuals responsible for the environment.

… a key factor in the development both of healthy, happy individuals and of good societies… the growth of persons of good moral character is indispensable. This, in turn, according to Makiguchi, depends on whether those persons develop a realization of their interdependence and interconnectedness with the natural and social phenomena in their environment. Such realization and awareness can develop in a person’s life only through direct, first-hand experience upon the part of each person with that phenomena. What is needed, therefore, are educational structures and teacher guides capable of enabling every child and youth to have this kind and quality of learning experience.30

In fact, Makiguchi gives examples of as many as eight different kinds of spiritual interactions between person and nature. The J. Krishnamurti philosophy also advocates people’s on-going interaction with nature and beauty as a means to foster long-lasting attitudes.

Conclusion

Young children are so open and ready to absorb anything we throw at them. If we taught a kindergartner to build a bomb, he wouldn’t know any better and he would build that bomb. If we taught a kindergartner that hugging your friends and helping others is how to become happy, that kindergartner would help others and hug his friends, because he wouldn’t know any better. Take a step back and think…what are we teaching our children, the bringers of the future? Are we teaching them to respect one another and to bring forth their highest potential as human beings and care about one another? Are we teaching them to care for the environment and for themselves? It is up to parents and teachers to take the first step in changing our world. They say it takes a village to raise a child. The village Earth is quite large and the billions of children that need to be raised are the responsibility of each and every one of us, whether parent, teacher, friend, or citizen of this Earth.

Education has the power to change the world, but unfortunately that power is being used to raise automatons that are greedy for wealth and power. The most powerful tool we

have, education, is becoming the source of our suffering and the wrench in the workings of our peaceful society. In America, we face the schooling method of teaching to the test and in Japan every child must attend cram schools. Children are taught to study so they can pass a test and get a good job, but they are not taught to support their friend who may not have passed that same test and is struggling to provide food for his family. Children are being taught that making money and earning status is the most important thing in the world, and yet, they are not being taught that we are all human and no one human is better than another. But, how do we change this most fundamental error in our current system? Former Director of the Center for Dewey Studies and Professor of Philosophy at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Larry Hickman says about the role of education in a peaceful world, “Especially at this time-a time during which religious and other cultural divisions are tearing apart the fabric of social life in many parts of the world—especially now it is important that we reaffirm the importance of humanistic education and the role that it can play in healing such conflict and creating a better future.”

As Hickman shows with support from John Dewey, education must be the first thing to change.

In the face of an uncertain future, however, [Dewey] suggested that "it is well to remind ourselves from time to time that education is the most far-reaching and the most fundamental way of correcting social evils and meeting social issues." Social reform cannot be accomplished by legislative bodies or other powerful institutions. It must, instead, be the work "that can only be done by individual men and women, and that can be done by them only as they are themselves developed into full possession of all their potentialities." And it is precisely to "the degree in which education develops individuals into mastery of their own capacities [that] we must trust these individuals to meet issues as they arise, and to remake the social conditions they face into something worthier of [humanity] and of life."32

Having courage to make a change is all it takes to bring about peace and justice in our turbulent world. A child can decide to stand up to violence and chose a path of peace, but that decision is made with courage. As J. Krishnamurti emphasizes, the banishment of fear brings about the courage to change. If, like in the many examples given above, children as young as two years old can understand what it takes to love your fellow human comrades and respect everything that is good in this world, than there must be hope for our future. It all starts with the children. It starts with their education. Let's teach the children to create value in their world every single day and live a happy life. Let's not be the society that damages our children, thereby destroying our hopes for a happier future. Dr. Ikeda points out the grim truth about the times. "In a society lacking role models who can inspire the next generation, of course education cannot function properly.”33 That is why we emphasize the training of teachers. By constantly developing self respect and respect for all life in his/her personality a teacher can become a great role model for children to act for peace and


33 Ikeda, Soka Education, 66.
harmony. It all boils down to respect—a teacher respecting her students, students respecting their friends, and everybody respecting themselves. When education becomes about respect and about developing our potential to be peacekeepers and protectors of justice, we can live in a society of peace and justice.

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*The mission of Soka University of America is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life.*

Mottos

Be philosophers of a renaissance of life  
Be world citizens in solidarity for peace  
Be pioneers of a global civilization

Foster leaders of culture in the community  
Foster leaders of humanism in society  
Foster leaders of pacifism in the world  
Foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity