

Dr. Daisaku Ikeda

Recipient of Jamnalal Bajaj Award for Promoting Gandhian Values outside India-2005

Born: 2nd January, 1928

Graduate in Economics, Doctor of Philosophy

Dr. Daisaku Ikeda is currently the President of Soka Gakkai International (SGI) since 1975 and Honorary President of Soka Gakkai since 1979. He was earlier the President of Soka Gakkai from 1960 to 1979. The SGI is a global lay Buddhist movement that originated in Japan in 1930. Its membership includes more than 10 million members in Japan and more than 1.2 million members in 189 other countries and territories worldwide. For SGI members, Buddhism is a practical philosophy of individual empowerment and inner transformation that enables people to develop themselves and take responsibility for their lives. The promotion of peace, culture and education is central to SGI's activities. It is recognized by the United Nations as a nongovernmental organization and co-operates with the UN in a variety of humanitarian and public information programmes.

Dr. Ikeda is also the founder of numerous educational, cultural and peace institutions. He is also a prolific writer who has published more than 100 works including philosophical treatises, poetry, children's stories and photographic collections. Central to his thinking is the idea that a self-directed transformation within the life of each individual, rather than societal or structural reform alone holds the key to lasting peace and human happiness. This is expressed most succinctly in a passage in his best known work "The Human Revolution", Ikeda's novelization of the Soka Gakkai's history: "A great inner revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation and, further, will cause a change in the destiny of human kind." This statement, in fact, revisits Mahatma Gandhi's own statement and belief embodied in the words "Ekla Chalore."

Dr. Ikeda often cites the achievements and words of wisdom of people whose thoughts and actions resonate with Buddhism. Mahatma Gandhi is one of the most frequently cited world figures in his writings, speeches and guidance to the membership, most of which are printed in the Japanese daily organ of the organization (5.5 million circulation) and other periodicals published by local SGI organizations in many languages. Dr. Ikeda also takes initiative in developing exchange with like-minded individuals and institutions including those that promote Gandhian values.

Past programmes include a lecture "Toward a World without War: Gandhism and the Modern World" (1992, with Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti) and an exhibition "King Ashoka, Mahatma Gandhi, and Nehru - Healing Touch" (1994, with Indian Council for Cultural Relations).

Dr. Ikeda is a member of a large number of national and international organizations. His name is associated, along with other eminent personalities, with the founding of the Gandhi Institute for Reconciliation whose objectives include "to heal and revive human hearts and minds deeply wounded by violent ideologies and open the way for a new chapter in human history," "to demonstrate a stern, paternal love in his recognition of the need for training and discipline and only by developing the discipline of self-control could people truly understand the science and spirituality of non-violence and use it to overcome their weakness and realize their own strength," "because of Gandhi's exalted way of peace, to be inspired by a deep sense of passion; and because he was a creative, social reformer and leader of the people who wanted to develop a global network of spiritual solidarity and a world without war," "to link the revolutions of Gandhi and King, so that the two may come together to overthrow the old world and found a new moral citizenship of tolerance, respect for difference, and diversity maturity grounded in geographical and spiritual oneness" and "because the Mahatma's spiritual legacy is one of humanity's priceless treasures and because he is the greatest world leader of the 20th century."

Dr. Ikeda has received numerous doctorates, awards and distinctions including the Commendation for Peace and Human Rights Contributions, Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine, University of Natal (South Africa); Tagore Peace Award (India); Simon Wiesenthal Centre International Tolerance Award (USA); Rosa Parks Humanitarian Award (USA); UNHCR Humanitarian Award and the United Nations Peace Award.

