

Special Series:

Humane Education, A Bridge to Peace (4)

Daisaku Ikeda
Gu Mingyuan

Peace and Happiness for All People

Gu: This year, 2010, marks the eightieth anniversary of the founding of Soka Gakkai. On this occasion, I should like to express my fervent congratulations to you, President Ikeda, and to your organization and my heartfelt commendations for the contributions you make in the name of peace and spreading the spirit of love throughout society. Your first president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, raised aloft the banner of educational reform for the sake of the suffering masses and especially their children. Soka Gakkai came into being under his guidance. During World War II, your organization vigorously opposed nationalistic Shinto and Japanese militarism. As a consequence, the militarist government suppressed the organization. President Makiguchi was thrown into prison, where he died. Your sorrowful history makes it clear that, while waging a war of invasion that brought misery and suffering to China, Japanese militarists inflicted calamity and pain on good people in Japan as well. Nonetheless, you and other later Soka Gakkai leaders persevered in carrying out President Makiguchi's aims and continue the mission of realizing peace and happiness for all people in highly admirable fashion today.

The Path to Comparative Education—Interrelations between Culture and Education

Ikeda: I am deeply grateful for your warm words. President Makiguchi once wrote, "A single courageous individual dedicated to the Great Good can accomplish far more important things...." You are precisely such a person, and I am sure that your profound understanding of us would make him very happy indeed.

He was truly a lion whose great work as an original and creative geography scholar is undying and who, in the face of a militaristic regime, worked unhesitatingly for social tranquility and the happiness of children and the masses in general. This great pioneer was compelled to meet the end of his noble life in the cold confinement of prison. To proclaim to the world the worth of this relentless champion of justice, in 1993, the fiftieth anniversary of his death, we established the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Tokyo, near the Soka University campus. It towers as a guardian over the students of that institution, which can be called a crystallization of his most cherished wishes. The memorial hall is also a cultural and educational shrine where Soka comrades and leaders in the work of peace and humaneness from all over the world can assemble. On a magnificent scale, members of the world's younger generations are the heirs to the spirit of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who longed for peace and strove to blaze the way for young people.

In this installment of our dialogue, pursuant to what we said in our previous discussions, I hope to examine the relations between education and culture.

Culture is the soil in which abundant humaneness can flourish and bear fragrant blossom. In relation to the study of comparative education, you have cast light on culture by pointing out the difficulty of understanding the educational concepts and actualities of a country without taking its cultural traditions into consideration. In your *Cultural Foundations of Chinese Education*, you wrote that the factors influencing education should be divided into the political, the economical, and the cultural and that cultural factors influence it most deeply and lastingly. I agree completely. Discussing education without paying attention to culture is mere abstracting and misses the forest for the trees.

Further, you get to the heart of the matter when you identify education as a component of culture. You state that cultural influence on the level of philosophy, awareness, and concepts permeates the educator's and the learner's value criteria and views on human talents and the mentor-disciple relation, which in turn influence the establishment of educational values, goals, content, and systems.

Some kind of cultural imprint is to be found in any and all aspects of education. Consequently, understanding culture profoundly is indispensable to grasping the true nature of education in all countries and among all peoples.

One of the seven great parables in the Lotus Sutra—which, as you know, was translated into Chinese in China—is the Parable of the

Medicinal Herbs, which describes how the compassionate rain waters the great Earth, enabling all kinds and sizes of plants to bud and grow. Referred to as the parable of the three herbs and the two trees, this splendid teaching reveals how the rain of Buddha wisdom enables all diverse human beings to attain Buddhahood. It also evokes the image of a universal symbiosis in which all beings, including the human, harmonize and glorify life in individual ways within the mystical beneficence of the cosmos.

As we have already said, the inclusive term culture embraces science, art, religion, philosophy, morality, and law as well as manners, mores, and systems. The products of all human activities, including education, are generated on the broad, multilevel ground called culture.

If culture is figuratively the soil of symbiosis, all human activities are the plants and trees arising from it. The great tree of richly human education grows and thrives by drawing ample sustenance from the fertile cultural ground. The disposition inherent in a culture exerts an especially profound influence on the nature of education and its contents.

What is more, education itself plays an important role in the inheritance and development of culture. As you point out, education has a long and deep influence on culture and is indispensable to cultural transmission and succession. It accounts for the cultural genetics of posterity. I hope that, as we delve with greater depth and breadth into the great ground or foundation of culture, you and I can discover possibilities for a brilliant century of humane education.

Education as a Means and Methods of Cultural Transmission

Gu: As a basic component of culture, education, like literature, arts, and architecture, has its own relative independence as well as its own rules and characteristics. Furthermore, it is always nourished by the soil of ethnic culture. I am in complete agreement with you when you say that good education requires fertile cultural ground to grow in. The foundation of education, culture influences pedagogic value criteria and educational goals, content, and methods.

We need education in order to pass on to posterity parental experiences in production and society as well as various forms of customs and manners. This is why we may define the true nature of education as cultural transmission. Consequently, culture is the foundation and the content of education, which itself constitutes means and methods of cultural transmission.

But, instead of directly passing culture on to students in its original forms, the transmission process entails selection and modification. For example, Confucianism as we in China understand it today differs from the original philosophy of Confucius's own time because time and again it has undergone selection and modification.

Japan too belongs to the Confucian cultural sphere. During the Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) dynasties, Japanese scholars were frequently dispatched to China to study. Later Japanese students came into contact with the Neo-Confucianism of the Song (960–1279) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, which had a great impact on Japanese culture. But these students did not merely take Chinese Confucianism home unaltered. They too selected and modified it to create a something distinctly Japanese.

Cultures are divided into progressive and backward. It can be said that progressive cultures advocate peace whereas backward cultures advocate violent aggression. Education that teaches people the values of truth, goodness, and beauty is superior. Inferior education stirs up such evil as militarism and terrorism.

Chinese Confucianism is superior education because it teaches students to treat people benevolently; that is, with *ren* or humaneness and *li* or courtesy. In other words, the benevolent person loves others. Because of this superior kind of education, the Chinese people have placed great emphasis on peace, charity, and courtesy.

Education that abandons a nation's excellent cultural traditions in order to imitate the culture of another nation cannot be called superior. Thinking of the younger generations of today makes me aware of the pressing need to reinforce the superior cultural education of the Chinese people so that young people will not forget their traditions or lose sight of their roots.

Soka Gakkai and Culture and Education

Ikeda: As you say in your lucid explanation of the relation between the two, generating good pedagogy requires the inheritance and cultivation of good culture. At the same time, good education is indispensable to the inheritance and development of good culture. In his *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy* Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, while advocating the guidelines for the construction of a new pedagogy, stressed the importance of moving forward with cultural values as our goals. This indeed is the key point for the construction of a new pedagogy.

At this point, I should like to offer a partial explanation of the Soka

Gakkai's involvement with education and culture. As you said at the outset of this installment of our dialogue, November, 2010, marks the eightieth anniversary of the founding of Soka Gakkai. At that time (1930), the organization was known as the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, or Value-Creation Educational Society. When, at an advanced age, President Makiguchi was imprisoned by the oppressive militarist government and later died in prison, the majority of his disciples fell away. Josei Toda alone remained staunchly loyal, even in prison. Once released from prison, he rose to the challenge of rebuilding the devastated organization after the end of World War II. Essentially, Soka Gakkai as it is today was created from that time forward. On the occasion of the rebuilding, by changing its name to Soka Gakkai, or Value-Creation Society, President Toda clarified the organization's mission to bring peace and happiness to the general masses. President Makiguchi had undertaken the study and practice of Buddhism on his own in the quest for sound guidance principles and educational methods for the achievement of the ultimate goal of happiness for children. Incorporating the true meaning of this quest, President Toda hoped for new, vigorous activity in the direction of a more general mass cultural movement rooted in the fertile soil of Buddhist humanism wherein education could flourish and blossom. On May 3, 1951, he became the second president of the organization. Thereafter, under his leadership, imparting the hope of a human revolution for the ordinary people, Soka Gakkai rapidly spread throughout Japan. In my twenties at the time, I devoted myself wholeheartedly to carrying out my mentor's cherished undertaking. Some people ridiculed Soka Gakkai as a ragtag gathering of the poor and the sick. But, convinced that a religion with real power is a religion that sets out to save the suffering masses, we ignored malicious criticisms of this kind.

Our steady, daily, and persistent practice consisted of individual encounters, dialogues, and encouragement through discussion meetings called *zadankai*. I still fondly remember an occasion when a small house where a *zadankai* was being held became so overcrowded that the floor gave way.

In the confusion of the period immediately after World War II, many people were indeed impoverished and deprived of the chance for adequate education or the leisure to enjoy elegant culture. But, essentially, real cultural strength is determined not by economic poverty but by the richness of the human spirit. Some highly educated, affluent families are desolate and spiritually arid. By contrast, I have known many vigorous families who, though living in small, plain homes, were

blessed with bright laughter and the radiance of warmly sincere minds. Although lacking famous works of art, a house adorned with a single wildflower can be a revelation of the wisdom to create the value of beauty and culture rooted in daily life.

In some parts of the world, where violence and poverty are rife, ceaseless conflict and the ravages of war destroy human culture at the root, thus robbing people of all chance for education. In such places, where children grow up ignorant of family life and the joy of learning, sometimes playing at the gruesome reality of war provides the only amusement children have. It is a savage state of affairs indeed when human beings are trained only by inhuman war. In such instances of cultural collapse children have no futures.

As is clear from what you have said of your upbringing, you received a solid education from your mother and grew up in a home redolent of culture in the true sense. In spite of the difficulties of raising you on her own, your mother imparted to you the spirit of self-renewal and altruistic service. In a wonderful way, your own heart brims with the desire to repay your debt of gratitude to her. I believe that a life filled with such maternal and filial attitudes shines with a culture worthy of the best elements of humanity.

Immanuel Kant set forth three values: truth, beauty, and goodness. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, on the other hand, argued that truth is not a value but an object of cognizance and proposed his own set of three values: beauty, benefit, and goodness and said that human happiness consists in their acquisition. For the sake of creating these values he developed *Soka*, or Value-Creation, education. In his *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy* he defines these values in the following way.

1. Goodness—social value bearing on collective group existence
2. Benefit—personal values bearing on self-oriented individual existence
3. Beauty—sensory values bearing on isolated parts of individual existence¹

In the same work, he wrote, “Human life is a process of creating value, and education should guide us toward that end.” The goal of our *Soka* movement is to take President Makiguchi’s principles as our point of origin as we create the values of beauty, benefit, and goodness and, on a humanistic base, illuminate the world with the light of culture, education, and peace.

Human Faith and Spirit Are Essential

Gu: Surely it is fundamental to say that a certain amount of faith and spirit is essential to human life in this world. As you point out, economical poverty is unrelated to poverty as a human being. A person with faith and spirit whose heart is filled with love and who creates superior values for the sake of humanity lives a rich, supremely fulfilled life. This is what is meant by the ultimate value creation of human life advocated by Soka Gakkai.

Comparative Education in Japan and the World

Ikeda: At the inauguration of Soka University, I sent the following words as a guideline: “Only labor and devotion to one’s mission give life its worth.” Ultimate, completely fulfilled value is born of repeated, courageous work in the name of the noble mission of serving humanity and peace. I have actually known many anonymous heroes among the ordinary people who have demonstrated the truth of this statement by leading the valuable and creative life it refers to.

But now I should like to return to your special field of interest, comparative education. Beginning in the West in the nineteenth century, at the heyday of the nationalistic era, the pedagogy of industrialized nations became an important subject of research. Comparative education made great contributions in the examination of its educational methods and systems, thus enabling other nations to select and incorporate outstanding elements. In Japan, the study of comparative education gradually spread after the start of the twentieth century. At a time when study of Western education was flourishing, professors at Waseda University and the Tokyo Imperial University (now University of Tokyo) published books using terms like *comparative research* and *comparative education* in their titles. But serious study in this area did not get underway until after World War II, when comparative education was already flourishing worldwide. In the confusion of the immediate postwar years, people all over the world turned to education as a means of promoting the greatly desired national recovery. Research on education of the advanced nations became sufficiently active to generate what might be called a kind of educational competition.

In 1952, Kyushu University instituted a course in comparative education. The following year, a course in comparative study of educational systems was instituted at Hiroshima University. The field of study entered the mainstream in 1965 with the founding of the Japan

Comparative Education Society. Exchanges with universities in other countries stimulated further research, producing results widely used in reforming Japanese educational systems.

Modernization is the goal of comparative education. Many nations have achieved it to a certain extent. But now the nation-state structure is changing greatly. For instance, whereas breakup has occurred in the old Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe, regional integration transcending the nation unit has taken place in other zones, like the European Union. Under these conditions, it is no longer always possible to make comparisons based simply on individual nations. Moreover, the Internet and improved transportation infrastructures facilitate exchanges among peoples of different countries. We have entered an era in which large numbers of visiting students and laborers can relate to each other speedily and on a vast scale. How to educate people of diverse cultural backgrounds has become a pressing topic especially in nations with large numbers of foreign workers. In short, new conditions now make it impossible to limit educational comparisons within the older nation-state framework. Emphasis now is being placed on study and education in relation to a nexus of global issues. Our times require education to encourage symbiotic relations based on understanding and respect for diverse cultures; in other words, education for world citizenship. I feel that comparative education should be placed in the current of this new pedagogy. I understand that Premier Zhou Enlai was first to advocate comparative education in China. That was at the time when, after your experiences as a visiting student in the Soviet Union, you had joined the Institute of Foreign Education Research which was newly formed at Beijing Normal University.

The Role of Comparative Education in Pedagogic Reform

Gu: Precisely. I was no exception to the rule that coincidence and chance sometimes favor people. Comparative education has long been a traditional field of studies. As you say, it started in the West in the nineteenth century. Some pioneering educators introduced it into China from the beginning of the twentieth century. After the Liberation of 1949, however, a policy of learning everything from the Soviet Union put a halt to research in broader comparative education. As you point out, in 1964, Zhou Enlai set forth the idea that to understand other countries we must study them. Thereafter, organs for studying foreign education were set up, and studies were once again made of education in the West. At the time, this field was called, not comparative education,

but foreign-education research. After the end of the Cultural Revolution and subsequent reforms, courses in comparative education were once again instituted in the pedagogic world.

In 1980, Professor Hu Chang-tu, a comparative-education scholar at Columbia University, was invited to lecture at Beijing Normal University. At the same time, as preparation for opening comparative-education curricula, faculty members established 10 training courses at Beijing Normal University. On the basis of our long years of study and research, we undertook compiling our own, distinctive, comparative-education text, which was published in 1982 as *Bijiao Jiaoyu* (Comparative Education), by the People's Education Press (PEP)

At the time, I participated in operations and management in two capacities: department head of the Department of Education and director of the Institute of Foreign-Education Research.

In July, 1980, at the invitation of Masunori Hiratsuka, director of the Japan Comparative Education Society, I attended the fourth Worldwide Convention of Comparative Education in Saitama. This was my first visit to Japan. Observations of elementary and middle schools, University of Tokyo and Hiroshima University impressed me deeply with the way Japanese education was developing. From that time forward, making contacts with pertinent scholars all over the world, I become one of those people earnestly engaged in researching comparative education.

The simple significance of the field consists in comparing educational philosophies, systems, and models from various nations and regions; seeking universal rules and characteristic differences in pedagogic development and personnel training; and finally using the results of this process as reference in the educational development of one's own country.

Comparative education is multiregional and multicultural. Although this is easy to say, it makes research difficult owing to the more than two hundred nations and approximately two thousand ethnicities in the world. Some nations have industrialized; others are still in the developmental stage. Some are large; some are small. Some are ethnically homogenous; others are ethnically diverse. The situation is complicated and intricate.

Comparative research requires first of all the possibility of making comparisons. Selecting objects of comparison is extremely difficult. Since socialism is being modernized in China today, we selected certain industrialized nations—the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan—and studied their various experiences. Then we chose nations at about the same developmental stage as

China—India, Brazil, and so on—for research on such topics of common international interest as universal education, lifelong education, education for women, education for international understanding, and environmental education. The topics being studied are complex, and future research prospects are widening greatly.

The Great Impact of the Soviet Educational Model

Ikeda: Your explanation of the significance of comparative education is most lucid. Educating others means self-study as well. Therefore, working together, educators must acquire broad viewpoints, improve themselves, and illuminate each other. In this way they radiate the light of wisdom like clear mirrors.

On my first trip to China, in 1974, I talked with faculty members at Peking University, elementary and middle schools in Beijing, and a kindergarten in Shanghai. That same year, I visited Moscow State University and Leningrad State University. In those days, relations between China and the Soviet Union were deteriorating. From reading your *Cultural Foundations of Chinese Education*, I learned that during the 1950s specialists from the Soviet Union, which had considerable experience with socialist pedagogic theory and systems, were invited to China to provide models for setting up schools. In addition, about 200 Chinese students were sent to study in the Soviet Union each year. In the broad sense, such learning from another country could be called a comparative-educational undertaking.

But everything changed in the 1960s, the age of raging student power and worldwide educational reform. In China, the Cultural Revolution, to which you have alluded, brought the study of comparative education itself to a halt. It was a time of great personal hardship for you. In the late 1970s, however, when the tempest of the Cultural Revolution had blown itself out, educational modernization made great forward strides. As is clearly set forth in your written work, Deng Xiaoping proclaimed the need to introduce study materials from other countries and to absorb what was beneficial among them. This provided an opportunity for the acquisition of large quantities of material from such nations as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Japan to promote modernizing reforms of Chinese curricula and teaching in what can be called a revival of comparative education. During my visits to China at that period, the overflowing joy and passion faculties and students at the universities in your country—with which we have made frequent exchanges—devoted to scholarly research left a strong impression on

me. How do you evaluate the role of comparative education and learning from the pedagogies of other countries in contemporary Chinese growth?

Advancing the Cause of Peace through Learning

Gu: As you say, in the first phase after Liberation, China adopted a policy of full-scale learning from the Soviet Union. This was probably unavoidable, since, at the time, Western nations refused to recognize the new China and tended to freeze us out. We had no one to learn from except the Soviet Union. Consequently, Soviet education exerted a strong influence on us. In 1951, I traveled to the Soviet Union as one of the first visiting students from the new China. Naturally, upon returning home, I introduced and promoted Soviet educational theory and experience. I published many Chinese translations of Soviet material in the journal *Jiaoyu Yibao* (Educational translation report) issued in those days by the People's Education Press. The first of them was an experimental report on the developmental education theory of the famous Russian pedagogue Leonid Zankov (1901–1977). But, in 1958, as Sino-Soviet relations gradually changed, it became clear that many Soviet theories, systems, and methods were unsuitable for China.

At this point, we began seeking a path for the development of our own kind of education. In the 1960s, as relations between our two countries worsened, Soviet pedagogic theories were roundly criticized, and the quest for establishing a system of Chinese educational theory got underway. But the country remained exclusive, and reform was limited by the need to rely solely on experiences in training officers in what are called the liberated areas (those area liberated by the Red Army in the period of the war against Japan and the War of Liberation).

During the Cultural Revolution, which started not long after this, everything connected with the Soviet Union came under criticism. No exception, I too found myself being criticized. Still, though I kept this opinion to myself, I thought that not everything was wrong in Soviet education, from which I felt we could still learn a great deal.

Under prevailing circumstances, having studied in the Soviet Union became a dishonorable experience. As one such student, I was branded as a revisionist in thought and daily life. I lost my job and was subjected to what was called rustification; that is, I was sent into the country to work.

The Cultural Revolution threw the wholesome development of Chinese education into complete disarray. But, when it was over, the

doors were opened for us to turn our attention to the outside world, at last revealing the need to catch up with the educational diversity and richness other areas of the world had achieved. We therefore set about updating the content of Chinese education by enthusiastically importing pedagogic theories from overseas and employing new, foreign, teaching materials.

Comparative education was very useful then in introducing foreign educational experience. We presented the systems and developmental histories of a number of major industrial nations, studied tendencies in each country after World War II, and introduced pedagogic philosophical currents and trends then flourishing in the world. Among the wide variety of ideas we introduced were lifelong education, education for all, Zankov's developmental education, the harmony education of Vasilii Aleksandrovich Sukhomlinskii (1918–1970), the developmental psychology of the Swiss Jean Piaget (1896–1980), the constructivist theory of education of the American Jerome Seymour Bruner (1915–), and the theory of mastery learning of the American Benjamin Samuel Bloom (1913–1999). By means of these introductions, comparative education widened the field of vision and renewed the concepts of Chinese educators. My formulation, in 1980, of the theory that students are both the object of and the subject in education stimulated considerable controversy at the time. But study of the educational ideas of advanced nations presented as a consequence of comparative education gradually resulted in the acceptance of the students-first idea to the point at which it often appeared in official documents in China. Moreover it has become national policy to prioritize educational development as the way to build a country of superior manpower.

In addition, China has gained several useful experiences from studying the three educational reforms carried out in Japan since World War II. At present, not content to stop at superficial matters, we are pursuing in-depth quests for educational regulations and trends in various nations. Our comparisons have shown considerable differences in educational ideas and systems even among nations at the same level of economic development and with the same political system. For example, although they are both industrialized capitalist nations, the United States and Japan have widely divergent ideas about education. China and Japan, on the other hand, are at different levels of development and have different political systems but share many educational ideas. In both countries, the role of examinations and pressure to advance is great. This is true because both nations belong to

the sphere of Confucian culture, which exerts a profound educational influence. Industrialized nations have diverse historical backgrounds of social development and culture resulting in diversity in educational ideas and systems. Therefore, to study education in a given nation, it is necessary to study that nation's culture. This is what I call cultural research in comparative education.

In the present age of globalization and economic integration, we encounter many internationally shared educational problems, the deeper investigation of which requires us to employ comparative education. Researchers in this field must sincerely address such issues as education for all, lifelong education, women's right to education, environmental education, the relation between education and national development, education for international understanding, and so on.

Comparative education is more than an examination of rules of pedagogic development and mutual reference for promoting growth. It can also stimulate mutual understanding and the advancement of peace.

Education for Humanity

Ikeda: Because it includes a broad range of issues, including lifelong learning, the environment, and international understanding, comparative education is essential to the cultivation of global citizens. Actually visiting various countries, talking with local people, and coming into contact with their cultures are important to the advancement of comparative education. Soka University, which I founded, conducts exchanges with universities in 45 countries and regions. I have been invited to speak at institutions of higher learning on 32 occasions. To name a few of them: Harvard, Moscow State University, the University of Bologna, and, in China, Peking University (three times), Fudan University, Shenzhen University, and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. I always try to talk with students as well as with faculty members. At Oxford, I was even taken on a visit to a student dormitory. I frequently tell the professors and students of Soka University about the things I have learned from exchanges of these kinds.

There is much to be learned from diverse cultures and traditions. Wherever I have gone, I have sensed differences in the nature of classwork and student dispositions. But more important still, in all cases, I have seen that, in spite of differences in cultural backgrounds, excellent teachers always strive to educate in ways that serve the best interests of human beings. Instead of the dogmatic imposition of patterns, such education evokes the rich potentialities inherent in human

beings themselves, enables student personalities to flower, and encourages the young to apply their talents for the sake of peace and human happiness. It goes without saying that comparative education is important as a driving force in such an undertaking.

As you have examined education in many different countries, what has surprised you most? With what have you been most in sympathy? What have you been eager to introduce into Chinese education?

Education as a Means for Transmitting Life Force

Gu: You have visited numerous universities all over the world and have received honorable professorships and doctorates from many of them. In speeches delivered at these institutions, you have stressed education for human peace and happiness and its importance as a way to establish values. You told the rector of De La Salle University, in the Philippines, that education is vital to the imperative task of creating peace. In your talks with Israeli educators, you said that 25 percent of all Nobel laureates have been Jewish and asked what explains this excellence. You also praised the significance of the creation of a university even before the founding of the state of Israel. Surely your observations touch on issues that comparative education must address. I am therefore in complete agreement with your ideas and think that right now you are putting comparative education into practice.

The thing that has surprised me most in my international observations is the widespread extreme emphasis on the development of education, the concept of education as a way of transmitting life force, and the concern for training children. Another surprising factor is the appreciation afforded education for promoting morality and the formation of noble personalities. This approach gives hope for world peace.

My observations and study abroad have made many impressions on me. Notably, wherever I go, the people I meet are all friendly and long for peace. I have learned much from the emotions of simple, ordinary people.

I studied in the Soviet Union and have visited North America and Europe on several occasions. But Japan is the country I have visited most—I think more than 20 times. Everywhere in your country I have encountered a bright, enthusiastic attitude and lively, charming children and young people. They are the future of humanity. All the educational-institution directors and faculty members I have met believe that education sows the seeds of peace and, to my delight, hope for increased exchange and understanding.

When I studied there, the Soviet economy was briskly recovering from World War II. The Soviet people were friendly and, in terms of daily living, took almost embarrassingly good care of us. For instance, they would give up their places in line at motion-picture theaters so we could purchase tickets first. When a new film was showing at a club near our school, they left the best seats open for us. Our Soviet classmates helped us by supplementing our lecture notes. The head of the school often inquired whether anything was troubling us, and faculty members invited us to their homes.

The Soviet people were fond of reading and treasured their literature and art. They were often to be seen, book in hand, reading while riding trams or waiting in shopping lines. Russians are generous, cheerful, and sincere toward others. Among my classmates I made unforgettable friendships.

My longest stay in Japan was the four months I spent at Naruto, on Shikoku. The things that impressed me most deeply about your country were courtesy, order, neatness, cleanliness, and tranquility. Laying great stress on preserving all kinds of cultural properties, Japan has done a far better job of maintaining traditions in the midst of modernization than China has.

Balanced development is the most impressive aspect of Japanese education. Equal student rights are emphasized. Gentle care is taken of children with disabilities, and special classes are set up in all schools to accommodate their needs. Students are courteous. They and their teachers form a unity: teachers' desks are situated in classrooms.

Special mention should be made of the light clothing—short pants and skirts—primary-school children wore them even in the dead of winter. Their legs got quite red with the cold. When I asked them if they were not chilly, they answered yes. When I went on to ask why they didn't wear long pants, they told me shorts were primary-school policy. It was to make them stronger. In China, parents keep their children warm in winter by having them wear layers of thick clothing. Our education policies can learn from yours.

The Future in the Radiance of Children's Minds

Ikeda: I am surprised by your detailed knowledge of my associations with people from other countries and by your evaluation of them, which exceeds my deserts. I agree with your impressions of the Soviet Union. Many of the Soka University students who have studied in Russia speak movingly and gratefully of the warm treatment they received from the

Russian people. Of course, those who have studied in China, too, will always treasure memories of the kindness with which they were treated there.

You mention the lively impression Japanese children made on you. The liveliness and beautiful eyes of Chinese children moved me deeply. Once after returning from China, in one of the essays contributed to several Japanese monthly and weekly magazines, I wrote, “More than the superficial showiness of things like clothes, a rich future is to be found precisely in children’s mental brilliance and spiritual strength.” All over the world, it is children who reveal what a country’s future will be like. (The essays were later published in book form under the title *The Human Revolution in China* by the Mainichi Shimbun in 1974.)

Tradition and Modernization of Chinese Education

Ikeda: As you say, by changing with the times, education embodies its epoch. Nonetheless, because some immutable, traditional elements remain alive in national and ethnic education, I should like to turn to tradition, change, and modernization in Chinese pedagogy.

As major elements in the composition of modern Chinese education you stipulate the following five points.

1. Millennia of Chinese traditional culture.
2. The superior educational philosophy founded on science and democracy since the anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement of 1919.
3. Educational tradition in the old liberated regions.
4. The influence of Western educational philosophy, systems, and methodology.
5. Soviet educational influence after the founding of the nation.

You see modern Chinese education as an interrelated fusion of all these elements.

Education and Chinese Tradition

Gu: Education in China has venerable history. Its sources are remote and its current long. In reaching its present state of development, it has undergone various cultural influences. As you say, five major elements have had impacts on today’s Chinese educational tradition. Obviously, most basically, Chinese ethnic culture forms the core and foundation.

This is true because, over its continuous five thousand years, while absorbing and integrating various foreign elements, the main current of Chinese ethnic culture has remained unchanged. Like the Yangzi (*Chang Jiang*) and the Yellow (*Huang He*) rivers, it has flowed finally to the ocean after being joined by many tributary streams along the way.

In China, educational modernization has taken place during only the brief period of the last century. Whereas the conversion has been thorough, fundamentally altering examination systems, pedagogic systems, and curricula, the unchanged Chinese ethnic spirit still influences ways of thinking and living, thus continuing to have an impact on education.

The History of Relations between Confucian Culture and Education

Ikeda: Since, as you say, its history is very long, Chinese culture has exerted a correspondingly great and deep influence. Your enumeration of five important cultural elements calls to mind certain factors delineating concrete changes and epochs in the history of Chinese education. First, you speak of the millennia of traditional Chinese culture. Confucianism, which you discussed in the previous installment, is a central element in that culture. You have described how it, together with the system of imperial civil examinations, influenced Chinese education from the Sui to the Qing dynasties.

You divide the development of Confucian culture into three stages. The first, or original, stage centered on the concept of *ren*, or humaneness, and on rites as developed by Confucius (Kungzi), Mencius, and Xunzi. This involved more than a doctrinaire enumeration and annotation of teachings. As is vividly apparent from the *Analects of Confucius*, in this phase, master and disciple interrelated at a personal level to seek the correct Way cooperatively.

Having lost both parents at an early age, Confucius spent his youth in poverty and misfortune. Never daunted by his difficult situation, however, he continued to study and pursue the path to the ideal. I have heard that he never questioned the family lineages of any of his more than three thousand disciples. In the section on politics in the *Analects*, reflecting on his past life Confucius said, “At fifteen I set my mind on learning; by thirty I had found my footing; at forty I was free of perplexities; by fifty I understood the will of Heaven; by sixty I learned to give ear to others; by seventy I could follow my heart’s desires without overstepping the line. (At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew

the decrees of Heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.)”²

My mentor, Josei Toda, and his mentor, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, struggled as one against the Japanese militarist government of their time. For their actions they were thrown into prison where President Toda read the Lotus Sutra, cogitated, thoroughly mastered the quintessence of Buddhism and its respect for the dignity of life, and attained profound awareness of his mission to save the masses. He was 45 at the time, approximately the age at which Confucius was free of perplexities. He said that, though in this respect he was five years later than Confucius, he was not troubled because he had come to understand the will of Heaven five years earlier than Confucius did. The determination President Toda displayed at that time was the great point of origin for the postwar development of Soka Gakkai.

Harvard professor Tu Weiming, now Dean of the Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies at Peking University, with whom I published a dialogue, interestingly termed the meetings Confucius held with his disciples as a “community of dialogue.” In this age of original Confucian culture I see an ideal image of the indestructibility of education.

In the second stage, the reign of the Emperor Wu (141–87 BCE) of the Former Han, on the basis of what are called the Three Mainstays of Social Order, (loyalty, filial piety, and devotion) and the Five Constants (humaneness, righteousness, ritual, knowledge, and integrity), for the sake of controlling and supporting the empire, the theoretical morality of the feudal system evolved. The Later Han witnessed the founding of a great university in the capital Luoyang. The texts of the newly established Classics were literally engraved in stone, and Confucianism became the de-facto national teaching.

Imperial civil-service examinations were introduced during the Sui dynasty (581–618 CE). While I hope you will discuss them in detail later, suffice it here to say that they constituted a system whereby bureaucrats could rise to higher ranks. The grueling examinations stressed the ability to manipulate poetic texts and the Confucian Classics. The resultant system, whereby high officials were selected on the basis of actual capabilities instead of family background, produced talented people in a wide range of fields, thus contributing to the collapse of the old aristocracy and the firm establishment of a governing system with the emperor at the pinnacle.

In the third stage, the great Neo-Confucian (*Songming Lixue*)

philosophy formed by the absorption of Buddhist and Daoist thought concerning life and death and cosmology. Whereas the Buddhism and Daoism of the time tended to be unworldly, Neo-Confucianism characteristically connected ideas of the cosmos with those of human life and moral and political ethics. It evolved from the work of Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Mingdao, Cheng Yichuan, and Zhang Zai of the Northern Song (960–1127) and was completed by Zhu Xi of the Southern Song (1127–1279). During the Yuan dynasty (127–1368) Neo-Confucianism became the foundation of the imperial civil-service examinations as well.

The teachings of Zhu Xi were the axis of Japanese education and scholarship in the Edo period (1603–1868) and tremendously influenced the local ethnic spirit. At the same time they tended to rigidify popular thought. As you said earlier, when things reach a state of completion, they can reverse course and become retrograde.

Origins of the Chinese Examination System

Gu: That is true. As the examinations pioneered the way for the selection of civil officials, Confucianism was ceaselessly and creatively developing. But the traditional Chinese cultural influence on education was not completely positive. Since it emerged from a feudal society, feudalistic ideas have permeated many aspects of Chinese culture. Applying it today necessitates the processes of selection and reform.

In this light, let us analyze the examination system in a concrete fashion. In 606 CE, the emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty established a new category of recommended candidates for the mandarinates. This was the beginning of the civil-service examinations, which were further developed during the Tang dynasty (618–907) until a full series of tests for bureaucratic advancement was in place.

It was no coincidence that such a system was born in China. Since the Xia (2070–1600 BCE), Shang (1600–1046 BCE), and Zhou (1046–221 BCE) dynasties, heredity had determined advance within ruling groups. But succeeding generations were sometimes lazy, depraved, or corrupt, creating a hotbed for rampant vested interests. As feudal society evolved, rulers found that making the authority of the emperor absolute required weakening the aristocrats and centralizing authority over personnel. Therefore, the emperor Wu of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) started an early form of the imperial examinations in which local officials recommended to the imperial court candidates to take part in examinations on the Confucian classics to select officials to serve by

the emperor's side. Subjects and standards were set, and the emperor himself proposed the examination questions. In the Sui-dynasty system, subjects were set by the state, unified examinations were created for each grade, and people were chosen or advanced on the basis of test performance. This system was naturally an advance over the older hereditary system. It restricted the power of the aristocrats and opened the gates of bureaucratic advance to children of lower-ranking families. Anyone who studied hard and did well on the examinations could become a high-ranking official, enjoying generous perquisites and privileges. In short, they could become members of the ruling class.

The Real Meaning of Education, a Topic of Eternal Inquiry

Ikeda: The civil-service examinations had a great influence on school education. I understand that sometimes of the more than 100 thousand examinees only a few hundred passed. According to Song-dynasty records, the average age for passing was 36. Achieving this difficult feat demanded tremendous investments in time and capital. Private preparatory schools, called *shuyuan*, were set up in many places. Dramas of sadness and joy connected with the examinations are related in things like the following poem by the Tang-dynasty poet Du Fu (712–770):

“When I was a younger Du Fu
 I was honored as a national distinguished guest
 and wore out ten thousand books in reading,
 My brush was always inspired by gods...
 In the end this ambition withered.
 I became a bard instead of a hermit,
 and spent thirty years traveling on a donkey,
 ate traveler's rations in the luxury of the capital...”³

These famous verses poignantly reveal the sadness of the failed candidate and suggest how influential the examinations were for the youth of the time.

Confucianism, which originally pursued the human ideal, together with the examination system, came to play the role of a rigid foundation to maintain the empire. This makes me all the more painfully aware of the need always to inquire into the real meaning of education. All societies must constantly bear in mind the need to ask what purposes learning and education must serve.

Decline of the Examination System

Gu: Especially in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, after the introduction of the so-called Eight-legged essay (a mandatory literary style) the civil-service examination rigidified and then fell into decline. Actually, the collapse of the examinations signified the collapse of feudalism, of which its content and forms were embodiments. Concerning mainly the feudal morality and ethics of the authoritative Confucian texts—the Four Books and Five Classics—examinations concentrated on the philosophies of the past. Those who sat them had no latitude for their own personal opinions but were required only to be mouthpieces for sages of yore.

In his novel *A Madman's Diary*, Lu Xun had the following to say about feudal attitudes toward rites and courtesy: "... my history has no chronology, and scrawled all over each page are the words: 'Virtue and Morality.' Since I could not sleep anyway, I read intently half the night, until I began to see words between the lines, the whole book being filled with the two words—'Eat people.'"⁴

The contents of the examinations were diverse. Their forms were complicated, and they were divided into many different levels. The first, or juvenile level, was administered yearly by county magistrates. Those who passed it were given the title licentiate (*xiucai*) and were entitled to proceed to the second level. This was the provincial or home examination. It was held every three years, and those who completed it successfully were called recommended men (*juren*) and were entitled to advance to the centralized examination. This metropolitan examination was conducted two years after the completion of the home examination by the central Ministry of Rites. Successful contestants were called presented scholars (*jinshi*) and permitted to advance to the fourth level, or palace examination, conducted at the palace and presided over by the emperor himself. Those who passed this examination finally became officials in the civil service. There is no telling how many people spent their youths in this protracted, time-consuming process. The famous Qing-dynasty novel *The Unofficial History of the Forest of the Literati* (*Rulin Waishi*) by Wu Jingzi describes the fervor with which people pursued this goal in a vivid account of the mad reaction of the hero who passes the examination for recommended men at last when he is in his fifties. It is probably historical inevitability that in later times the examination system caused social corruption when it was unjustly used for personal profit and influence.

The greatest impact the system had on Chinese society—an impact

that still persists—was to sponsor awareness of the value of academic background. Many people in China today still believe that study is the key to advancement, wealth, and success with lovely women as well. But this attitude has proved harmful to Chinese education by stimulating wicked competition for school advancement and tendencies to stress theory over technical skill and general over vocational training.

Western Philosophy and the Breakdown of Feudal Education

Ikeda: I am very grateful to you for your explanation, which is as pertinent and full as might be found in an excellent textbook. I can see clearly how, though throughout its long history it supported a unified identity, the venerable traditional civil-service examination has had major negative influences.

With the passing time, any system is subjected to the process of selection. Historically speaking, the influence of the Chinese examination system has extended far and wide beyond China itself. For instance, it was introduced into Korea and Vietnam and has exerted an influence in the West as well. The French Enlightenment philosopher Guillaume Thomas Raynal (1713~1796) praised it for recruiting intelligent, talented people regardless of pedigrees, claiming that in China the concept of equality had reached the realm of perfection. No matter whether he was right or wrong, the phenomenon is very interesting.

Your second point stipulates the superior educational philosophy founded on science and democracy since the anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement of 1919. Your fourth point concerns the influence of Western educational philosophy, systems, and methodology. The two are inseparable. The examination system was abolished in 1905 presumably because of changes necessary in educational policies to train talented people to shore up the Qing dynasty in the face of aggression by Western and other powers. But, reaching a boiling point, revolutionary fervor nurtured by resistance to long years of suppression culminated in the Xinhai Revolution (Chinese Revolution) of 1911 and the birth of the Republic of China. At about this time, by way of Japan, Western pedagogic philosophy—mainly that of the German Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841)—was introduced into China. The Herbartian theory stressed rational instruction methods and the formulation of moral honor. As you point out in *Cultural Foundations of Chinese Education*, since this agreed well with the traditional Chinese idea of supervision and moral training, it was extensively used in the

educational world from the end of the Qing dynasty and into the early phase of the republic. In the 1920s, the noted scholar Wang Guowei worked as the editor for a magazine entitled *Jiaoyu Shijie* (The World of Education), which introduced the philosophies of several noted Western educators like Johan Amos Comenius, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. In 1915, as the demand among intellectuals for a new culture was on the rise, the newly founded journal *La Jeunesse* (New Youth) took democracy and science as bywords and published much anti-Confucian material. One such was Lu Xun's colloquial *A Madman's Diary*, to which you alluded. The same journal published Lu Xun's discursive writing entitled *Re Feng* (Hot Wind), in which occurs his proclamation to the effect that the inherent thirst for human perfection must move forward, trampling the barbed-wire fence of whatever darkness obstructs the current of thought, whatever misery attacks, and whatever evil desecrates humanity. While breaking the fetters on the masses and crashing through the walls of evil tradition, Lu Xun consistently maintained his firm, inner pride. His works are deeply engraved on my mind as favorites from my youth.

The journal *La Jeunesse* also carried the writings of Western educational philosophies like that of John Dewey. As American pedagogic systems were being imported into China, educational reforms on the basis of the principle that the children themselves should be the core of the process were being debated. As exemplified by "life education" of Tao Xingzhi (1891–1946), who studied under Dewey, many educators enthusiastically engaged in progressive pedagogic experiments.

When he visited the country in 1919, at the time of the May Fourth Movement, Dewey perceived the birth of a new China in the midst of the political upset. What did Dewey see in the Chinese people, especially the youth? From that time and into the 1920s, the ideas of William Heard Kilpatrick (1871–1965), who was influenced by Dewey and who developed the Project Method, and of Helen Parkhurst (1887–1973), who proposed the Dalton Plan, were being introduced into China. Both of these American thinkers were noted for criticizing traditional emphasis on textbooks and graded classes and insisting on the importance of children's independent learning activities.

As you point out with praise, during this period, the old feudal education was collapsing, providing opportunities for the growth of scientific and democratic education. After the 1950s, however, acceptance of Dewey's ideas temporarily declined. And it was not until about 1980 that the idea of emphasizing children's creative abilities was

reevaluated. The trend continues to the present.

In the quest for a new kind of education, I engaged in a three-man exchange of views with two former presidents of the American Dewey Society: Jim Garrison, professor of the philosophy of education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, in Blacksburg, Virginia, and Larry A. Hickman, director of the Center for Dewey Studies and professor of philosophy at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi placed great weight on Dewey's educational philosophy. The SGI-USA New York Culture Center is located in an historic building where John Dewey once lectured.

Although changes have occurred over time, Dewey's pedagogy has long been an object of research in China. What of his thought has your country accepted? How did it take root? In concrete terms, what influence has it had on Chinese education?

Dewey's Philosophy and China

Gu: From the outset, Chinese modernization was modeled on events in Japan after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Consequently, the Japanese education system naturally became the model for educational modernization in China. But after 1915, the year in which *La Jeunesse* was founded, Western pedagogic ideas began flooding the nation. Under the banner of science and democracy, copying Western educational systems and methods increased after the May Fourth Movement. The influence of American education had an especially great and profound influence. Whereas in the last years of the Qing dynasty, most Chinese studying abroad went to Japan, after the Xinhai Revolution, most of them went to the West. In the 1920s, 80 percent went to the United States to study.⁵

On May 1, 1919, at the invitation of five scholarly groups, including Peking University and the Jiangsu Provincial Education Association, John Dewey came to China to lecture. He remained for two months and three months, until August, 1921. His travels took him to 11 provinces, among them Fengtian, Zhili, Shanxi, Shandong, Jiangxi, Hunan, Fujian, and Guangdong. In all those places he lectured on his pragmatic educational philosophy. The contents of his talks were published in various journals, in a volume of five lectures delivered at Peking University, another volume of three delivered at Nanjing University, and in other books dealing with his educational philosophy and with education and democracy. Chinese students who had studied under him at the Columbia University of the United States played a major part in making this lecture series a reality. Hu Shi, Jiang Menglin, and Tao Zingzhi, all

of whom were well known in the educational field of the day, not only invited him to China, but also accompanied him on his tour as interpreters. He was in our country at just the time when the new May Fourth culture movement was in full swing and when, under the influence of democratic ideas, a drive for education of the masses was getting underway.

Even before Dewey's visit, his former student Hu Xi had been explaining his philosophy and had said that, though Dewey's educational philosophy was inexhaustibly diverse, if we could break the old class-oriented system, we would promote two major conditions for education for the masses at large that it advocates.

Indeed such education was booming at the time. In March, 1919, the Peking University civilian education lecture groups were formed. They remained active until 1925. In October, 1919 a civilian education society formed at Beijing Higher Normal School (predecessor of Beijing Normal University) began issuing a journal called *Pingmin Jiaoyu* (Civilian education). This organization remained active until the latter half of 1924, by which time it had put out 73 issues of its journal. In June, 1923, at Nanjing University, Zhu Qihui, Tao Xingzhi and Yan Yangchu established the National Association of the Mass Education Movement (MEM). At this time, popular education for the masses was being developed in 20 provinces and districts throughout the country.

You have asked how Dewey viewed Chinese youth and what he thought of them. Judging on the basis of the length of his stay and the close similarity between his egalitarian educational philosophy and the Chinese movement for educating the masses, I would say that he was completely fervent and hopeful in regard to Chinese youth. He advocated American democracy. Obviously for Chinese youth, who had experienced the oppression of feudalism and imperialism and who trusted in revolutionary methods to effect social reform, the drive for education of the masses was only one way of bringing about improvement. Dewey's progressive educational ideas, which he advocated in addition to mass education, were completely different from the philosophy of the German Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel (1782–1852), accepted in China until that time. Dewey advocated that learning is identical to life and school to society and taught that children should learn through their own actions. Classwork should begin with the learners' own experiences.

After the establishment of the new China, like his pragmatism, Dewey's pedagogic philosophy too came in for criticism. Nonetheless, his insistence on the importance of children's independent activity

continued to exert a broad influence on Chinese educational practice. Since the initiation of reforms, his educational philosophy has been reevaluated and is once again considered important.

Education as the Driving Power behind a New China

Ikeda: I am certain that what Dewey felt about Chinese students was precisely the total fervor and hope you mention. In all epochs and all countries, the maximum source of hope is to be found in youth aflame with the resolution to build. The breath of aspiring young people transmits passion and power to everyone around them. That is why I constantly encourage youth and devote myself entirely to education. In this I am of the same frame of mind as you.

I cannot help being moved by the way young scholars who shared beautiful mentor-disciple bonds with Dewey actively prepared the way for spreading his educational philosophy in China.

Now to return to the points you enumerate, the third of which pertains to educational tradition in the old liberated regions. On my first trip to your country, in 1974, I visited the commemorative site of the Guangzhou Peasant Movement Training Institute, which opened in July, 1924, and at which Premier Zhou Enlai taught. Possibly not strictly devoted to total-personality cultivation, this is a place where young people from all over the country assembled to be trained. It became a flashpoint for the peasant movement. Standing there, I was deeply struck by the realization that the power of youth is the real driving force behind the building of a new nation.

Your fifth point deals with Soviet educational influence after the founding of the nation. We have already discussed this topic, but I should like to enter into it in somewhat greater detail. In those days, the ideas imported from the Soviet Union centered on the theories of Ivan Andreyevich Kairov (1893–1978), who believed that children should acquire cognitive abilities and receive the kind of education suitable to the building of a communist society. The teacher should provide planned guidance. But, as you point out in *Cultural Foundations of Chinese Education*, while maintaining a scientific system for the instruction process, his theory entailed problems in relation to central emphasis on classroom instruction and on instructors. Introduced into China in 1951, the Soviet educational system created study opportunities, especially for workers and peasants, and reinforced cultivation of personnel needed for the building of the nation. Study materials, instruction models, and teaching methods were imported from the Soviet Union. But, as you say,

unfortunately, student-led seminars failed to take root, while the main import proved to be teacher-centered. In the 1980s, you published papers, paying attention to facets of the Soviet method that did concentrate on student independence and devoted great energy to promoting disposition education, which elevates children's creativity.

Acceptance of Soviet Education in China

Gu: As I said earlier, after the foundation of the new nation, China adopted a policy of overall learning from the Soviet Union. For the first several years, from a minimum of more than two hundred to more than two thousand Chinese students a year went to study in the Soviet Union. Soviet specialists came to China to teach, and large quantities of Soviet teaching materials were translated into Chinese. But the study process was erratic since many Soviet methods were unsuited to Chinese conditions. For example, customarily 10 years were allowed for primary and middle schooling in the Soviet Union, whereas China had a 12-year plan. Introducing the 10-year Soviet curriculum into the 12-year Chinese system meant lowering fundamental middle/high school levels. Before Liberation, geometry and calculus were studied in middle school. After the Liberation, they were excluded from the curriculum in middle/high schools. To resolve these issues, in 1958, China set out on its own path. This was the starting point from which great educational reforms developed. In 1960, Chinese education was criticized for poor content, slow progress, low levels, and high costs. As relations between the two nations deteriorated, Soviet educational theory, too, became an object of criticism. Nonetheless, it continued exerting an influence because, at basic levels, it stressed the systematic, scientific acquisition of knowledge, training in fundamental attainments and skills, and the main leadership role of the instructor. In these things it corresponded with traditional Chinese pedagogic emphasis on knowledge and learning and emphasized the role of the teacher.

In the field of higher education too, the newly formed China learned from the Soviet Union, making two large-scale adjustments in colleges and their component departments. Some results were positive. For instance, the foundation of a series of specialist colleges—institutes of aeronautics, geology, petroleum, mining, iron and steel, and posts and communications—trained many talented people, thus creating the personnel basis for industrialization.

Others of its effects were negative. For instance, it resulted in the dismantling of several formerly famous general universities and the

consequent decentralization of scholarly strengths. The separation of the engineering and medical divisions left Peking University with only two faculties: those of literature and physical science. Tsinghua and Zhejiang Universities became comprehensive engineering universities. For this reason, consolidation in the late 1990s was carried out with the idea of reviving several truly comprehensive universities.

The first socialist society in the world, the Soviet Union had strong appeal for the new China. Chinese youth respected the Soviets all the more for their heroism in the early phases of nation building and during World War II. As a young person in those days, I too was attracted by Soviet courage and was deeply moved by Pavel Korchagin, the hero of Ostrovsky's novel *How the Steel Was Tempered*. I have always loved Russian literature and art, and read the works of writers like Chernishevsky, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov even before the Chinese Liberation. During my stay in the Soviet Union as a visiting student, my fondness for Russian and Soviet literature and art intensified, as I read the works of such other writers as Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Sholokhov and systematically visited the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. After the Liberation, many works by Russian and Soviet authors were translated into Chinese and acquired a broad readership. Songs from the period of World War II, or the Great Patriotic War as the Russians term it, are still very familiar to the Chinese people.

With worsening relations between our two countries, however, all exchanges came to a halt. Still, when slight improvements occurred, in 1984 we organized a group of representatives of Chinese higher education and once again were able to tread Soviet soil. Though exchanges with the local people were strictly regulated, we were able to observe higher-learning institutes and colleges in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev.

Unfading Memories of Visits to the Soviet Union

Ikeda: Your exposition helps me understand even better the transitions in Chinese education and the various influences the Soviet Union had on it. I have lasting memories connected with education in both countries. When, as I said, I first visited the Soviet Union, in September, 1974, Sino-Soviet relations remained tense. Nonetheless, at his spacious offices in the celebrated Moscow State University, Rector Rem V. Khokhlov explained that the conspicuous and beautiful tapestry depicting an overall view of the front of his university was a gift from Peking University. I still remember being thrilled to the core at the sight

of this tapestry expressing amity and the faith of noble scholars and teachers in the ability of education to remain outside the control of temporal, political movements, even in times of international upset.

I also remember well having a conversation with the famous novelist Mikhail A. Sholokhov (1905–84) during the same visit. Recalling his masterpiece *The Fate of Man* (*Sudba cheloveka*), which describes a father and his son who powerfully overcome the misery of the war with the Germans, I asked his opinions on human destiny. After some quiet thought, he replied that belief is the important thing. It is a power with which a person advances toward the goal. Without it, people can do nothing. “We are all the blacksmiths of our own happiness,” he said. A spiritually strong person exerts an influence, no matter what turns fate takes.

I sensed great spiritual strength in him, and I often repeat his words to young people. I feel the same brilliant, powerful spirit in my many friends in Russia and in China. I can understand how the Russian songs of the time of the Great Patriotic War would still be popular among the Chinese people. Culture rooted in profound humanity speaks to everyone regardless of national boundaries or epochs.

We have now examined the flow of Chinese education in accordance with the five elements you cite. You argue that traditional education is not easy either to affirm or deny and cite as good examples the traditional method of teaching according to pupil aptitude and mutual learning between teachers and pupils. As a bad example of traditional education, you cite the influence of the imperial examination system. The thing to do is to evaluate the millennia-old traditional system and modernize it, preserving its good elements. The challenge of achieving this must have caused Chinese educators immense difficulties. Owing to its current population of 1.3 billion people, the vast experiment of advancing public education in China gives hope to all humanity.

Attempting to Modernize Chinese Education

Gu: Thank you for saying so. The development of Chinese education has produced great results in the 60 years since the establishment of a new nation, and especially in the 30 since the initiation of reforms. In the past much of the population, which as you say now numbers 1.3 billion, was illiterate. But with the spread of a compulsory nine-year education system, this has been totally changed. Higher education, too, has made great strides and has now reached the level of the masses in general. But we still have a long way to go to make full modernization a

reality.

The recent *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development*. (2010–2020) establishes the following basic policy: “Giving priority to development, taking the cultivation of people as the starting point, carrying out reform and innovation, promoting equity, and improving quality.” The strategic goals to be attained by the year 2020 are to modernize education basically, bring a learning society into shape, and turn China into a country rich in human resources. In addition, we must strive to popularize higher education further; deliver equal education to everyone; offer quality education in various ways; build an adjusted framework for lifelong education; and establish a full-fledged, vibrant education system.

To achieve these goals, people in the education field must boldly attempt to re-create the system, develop novel concepts and a more open way of thinking in the ways listed below.

1. Since Chinese culture is the core and the foundation on which Chinese education has developed, in modernizing our education, we must respond correctly to that traditional culture.
2. We must preserve and invigorate what is good in Chinese tradition, while criticizing and eliminating outdated concepts and ideas.
3. Instead of concentrating on narrow values like going on to the higher educational institutions, we must adopt comprehensive educational values.
4. We must reform old conservative views of personnel and personnel training. We must realize that everyone has developable talents and strive to cultivate diverse human beings in favor of the idea of training variously talented people for a multi-dimensional, modern society.
5. We must break free from the idea of appointment and promotion solely on the basis of academic background over ability and theory over skill and establish concepts of appointment and promotion that emphasize both academic background and ability.
6. We must abandon old views of instruction and disposition in favor of concepts fostering teacher-student linkage in which students are the principal elements and instructors their guides as well as developing the integrated quality of both comprehensiveness and individuality.
7. We must break with the idea that education is limited to the

school environment and establish a broader education including lifelong learning.

8. We must respond correctly to foreign educational philosophies and experiences.

Naturally, since it was introduced from abroad, the current Chinese educational system is permeated with many Western cultural ideas. But we are opposed to the occidentalist notion that all things Western are good and that modernization is synonymous with Westernization. We must become increasingly liberal-minded and strive to absorb outstanding cultural elements from the whole world. Over the past 20 years, various educational ideas have flooded into China. Our task is to distinguish among them seriously, do our utmost to absorb them, Sinicize and internalize them, and make them serve the ends of both educational tradition and educational progress. Finally, we must create new experiences by boldly applying and practicing what we learn in this way. In the above-mentioned plan, it was emphasized that reform and innovation provide the mighty driving force for educational development. The six major reforms were proposed, the first being the reform of the system for talents or professionals. The other five are reform of examinations and enrollment system, building a modern school system, reform of school-running system, reform of education administration system, and further opening of China's education. Attempted practice of these reforms showed the need for further innovation. We must respect the creativity of the schooling site and group because they are frequently the sources of experience. In any case, the actual modernization of Chinese education is a heavy responsibility and a long journey.

The Treasure of On-the-scene Practice

Ikeda: I understand what you mean. I find your insistence on respecting attempts and practice in the actual educational environment especially significant because practice bears the weight of a person who actually experiences the difficulties entailed over and over again. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who started out as the principal of a primary school and evolved an excellent theory of education, felt just as you do. He wrote, "Realizing a large-scale, organized, scientific educational plan requires awareness of the need to distinguish clearly between planning organizations and implementing organizations. Both kinds of organizations must understand each other and cooperate completely in fulfilling their roles.

He also wrote that to be truly useful, pedagogy must arise from educational daily life.

As heirs to President Makiguchi's spirit, in unflaggingly putting education into practice, members of the Soka Gakkai Education Division fervently maintain the primacy of students in education and insist that revolutions in education begin with revolutions within the teachers themselves. Amounting to more than forty thousand cases, written records of their practical activities have earned praise from all over Japan as living pedagogic theory. Since educational reform is a worldwide issue, many people related to the field, including currently active teachers in Japan and China, engage energetically and persistently in all kinds of pertinent undertakings. I am certain that the sincere passion and hard work you and all the others involved in will blaze a broad path to a new kind of education.

NOTES

¹ Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, *Education for Creative Living: Ideas and Proposals of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi*, translated by Alfred Birnbaum; edited by Dayle M. Bethel (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1989), p. 75.

² *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 20.

³ Translated by Tony Barnstone and Chou Ping

⁴ *Selected Stories of Lu Hsun, The True Story of Ah Q, and Other Stories* (written 1918–1926), translated by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1960, 1972)

⁵ Zhou Gupin, *Jindai Xifang Jiaoyu Lirun Zai Zhongguo De Chuanbo* / 近代西方教育理论在中国的传播 (Transmission of modern Western educational theory in China), Canton Educational Press

Daisaku Ikeda

Recipient of 330 (as of August 17, 2012) honorary doctorates and professorships from the world's academic institutions, Dr. Ikeda was born in Tokyo in 1928. He has founded a range of educational institutions from kindergartens to universities with post graduate facilities located around the world, starting with the establishment of Soka University in Tokyo, which opened to undergraduate students in 1971. Other cultural institutions founded by Dr. Ikeda include the Min-On Concert Association and the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum. Academic and peace research institutions founded by Dr. Ikeda are the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research (Tokyo/Honolulu), Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and Dialogue, and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (Tokyo). Dr. Ikeda is the author of books on Buddhist philosophy, stories for children and a novelized history of Soka Gakkai (*The Human Revolution, The New Human Revolution*), and is co-author of a series of dialogues that began in 1972 and includes *Choose Life*, his discussion with the historian Arnold J. Toynbee. His interest in China dates from 1968, when he publicly called for restoration of Sino-Japanese relations. Since normalization of bilateral ties in 1972, he has visited the People's Republic of China ten times, including a meeting with the late Premier Zhou Enlai.

Gu Mingyuan

Now president of the Chinese Society of Education and Honorary Dean of the College of Education Administration (Beijing Normal University), Gu Mingyuan was born in Jiangyin, Jiangsu Province. He studied in Beijing and Moscow, served as a professor, directed the International and Comparative Education Research Institute, and became vice president of Beijing Normal University. He has played a major role in promoting education in China. Having served as president of the China Education Association for International Exchange and president of the Chinese Comparative Education Society as well as vice president of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies, he is an honored figure on the world educational stage as well. China awarded him the title National Distinguished Teacher in 1991, and Beijing named him a People's Teacher in 1999. Hong Kong recognized him with an honorary doctorate of education in 2001 from the Hong Kong Institute of Education, and Teachers College of Columbia University awarded him their Honorary Professor Medal in 2008. He has edited several encyclopedias and professional journals, including *Comparative Education Review*. Professor Gu is the author of *Education in China and Abroad: Perspectives from a Lifetime in Comparative Education* (translated and published in English) and other books in his field.