

## A Message to the 1st International Symposium on Global Citizenship Education

Daisaku Ikeda

The following words from John Dewey reach out to the very marrow of my being:

There exists a *mixture* of good and evil, and that reconstruction in the direction of the good which is indicated by ideal ends, must take place, if at all, through continued cooperative efforts.

They serve as a creed that renowned Dewey scholar Professor Jim Garrison, whom I hold in the highest esteem, has carried forward and so generously shared with me.

The 1st International Symposium on Global Citizenship Education is what will enable our “continued cooperative efforts” to bear light. As founder of this institution, then, please accept my heartfelt appreciation to and admiration for the many distinguished individuals who have gathered here to take part in this Symposium.

The 2022 UN Transforming Education Summit, which concluded in September, features the Vision Statement of the Secretary-General. It cites the importance of education in achieving the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and makes clear the need for educational reform and innovation to better prepare a world that has been upended by rapid change and disruption.

This Symposium is a timely development to that summit, with its theme being “Restoring Learning to Daily Living: Global Citizenship and John Dewey.” Both Dewey and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi—who founded value creating Soka education and felt profound resonance with the educational philosophy of his American contemporary—placed great faith in the limitless capacity of learning that draws sustenance from the great earth of daily life.

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Given the precarious state of international affairs today, numerous difficulties threaten the domain of daily life itself. It is through the deliberate responses to such challenges that I hope to open and expand new vistas through which education for global citizenship will progress.

The first of the responses I propose is to develop a learner's creative life through the courage to learn.

When Dewey visited Japan in 1919, he noted what is crucial to a person's intellectual development:

It is in constant process of forming, and its retention requires constant alertness in observing consequences, an open-minded will to learn and courage in re-adjustment.

In his poem "Truth's Torch," Dewey wrote:

No course is lit  
By light that former burned

It captures vividly the pall descended upon our world today—and yet, Dewey goes on, calling out to us to draw forth the courage to blaze new pathways:

From darkness bit by bit  
The present road is learned.  
.....  
Till dart th'arrows  
Of thine own lifted flame  
Through clinging fogs that close  
And hide the journey's aim.

Even while imprisoned by Japan's wartime militarist regime, Makiguchi—one of my foremost mentors in life—continued with his conscientious reading of philosophical texts. Despite subject to brutal interrogations, he persisted in expounding his thoughts of building the ideal future society, one transcending the era rife with state-centered chauvinistic iniquity in which he lived.

Thus, it is by carrying forward the courage to continue learning, the moral courage—the two being what I would describe as the ultimate expression of nonviolence—from generation to generation, further honing its practice over time, that the torch of hope will be lit with which the creative life of humanity will advance anew.

Another response would be to engage in tireless dialogue to forge a community united through the joy of mutual learning.

Both Dewey and Makiguchi recognized that daily life serves as a forum for dialogue, with dialogue then serving to foster a strong sense of mutually instructive fellowship among learners. Through technological advances in such areas as the internet in particular, the forums for dialogue have become even more free and forthcoming, ever more diverse.

The discourse taking place at these forums—be it within the local community or in exchanges among countries or peoples—lends itself to a deeper reaffirmation of the spirit of dialogue, while allowing partakers to share and learn from the diversity and differences of one another. This, in turn, should provide us with the opportunity to weave even finer the wondrous fabric of our creative union.

To believe that dialogue leads to learning is to believe in the universality and inherent nature of human goodness as well as in the inestimable potential of every human being. Having long embraced this belief myself, I have striven to expand such a joyous community and serve in the building of a groundswell for peace, being true to this passage from a Buddhist scripture: “Both oneself and others together will take joy in their possession of wisdom and compassion.”

The third response I would like to propose is to define what a philosophy of happiness should be for global citizens who act with resilience.

I have drawn much inspiration from this conviction of Dewey’s:

One may find happiness in the midst of annoyances; be contented and cheerful in spite of a succession of disagreeable experiences, if one has braveness and equanimity of soul.

Having lived through times riddled with uncertainty and complications, Dewey would

conclude, “My philosophy of life is based essentially on the single word *patience*.”

I once asked the British historian, Arnold Toynbee, what counsel he would offer for young people in the future: His advice was identical to Dewey’s—patience.

That is the philosophy of happiness I wish to entrust to young global citizens, those who bear immense purpose in shaping the outcomes of this much-troubled century, a philosophy built on patience, yet inspiring joy and courage.

In closing, allow me to express my firm resolve to strive together with the esteemed individuals gathered here, in drawing forth the indomitable capacity of global citizens to create value under any and all circumstances.

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