

## **Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy of Value-Creating Global Citizenship Education and Africana Humanism: Africa as the Continent of the 21st Century**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Daisaku Ikeda proclaimed that Africa would be the beacon of hope for the world in the twenty-first century. Contemporaneously, Kwame Nkrumah was excited about the potentially galvanizing role a united Africa might play on the world scene. Nkrumah envisioned the reawakening of an African personality, which would provide the foundational essence for the United States of Africa and accelerate African psychological, political, and economic decolonization. Nkrumah's conceptualizations of unity mesh with Ikeda's paradigms of global citizenship. This paper shows how Ikeda's philosophy of value-creating education for global citizenship could amalgamate Africana educational models toward global citizenship as a unifying factor in Africa and the diaspora and as an instrument for making Africana Humanism the spirit of the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** African and African Unity, Daisaku Ikeda, Global Citizenship, Kwame Nkrumah, Diaspora, Humanism

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### **INTRODUCTION**

**W**.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) announced in 1903 that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the color line. Daisaku Ikeda, upon his first visit to the United Nations in New York, October 14, 1960,

proclaimed: “The twenty-first century will be the century of Africa. The world should support the growth of this young sapling” (1995, p. 184). Contemporaneously, Kwame Nkrumah (1912–1972), the first president of independent Ghana in West Africa, was excited about the potentially galvanizing role a united Africa might play on the world scene. Nkrumah (1963) envisioned the reawakening of an African personality, which would provide the foundational essence for a United States of Africa and accelerate African psychological, political, and economic decolonization. Ikeda’s philosophy of value-creating education for global citizenship has a function to enact in amalgamating Africana educational models toward global citizenship as a unifying factor in Africa and the diaspora and as an instrument for making Africana Humanism the spirit of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Ikeda has discussed African political, economic, and educational programming in many of his annual peace proposals presented to the United Nations. He has presented proposals for aiding Africa’s development based on his conceptualization of global citizenship and in resonance with African paradigms of communalism, humanism, and *ubuntu*. He believes that African philosophies, like *ubuntu*, embody humanistic ethos, which can enable individuals to manifest happiness and self-fulfillment in their daily lives (Indangasi, Mwangi, & Odari, 2018). Ikeda advocates for societies to nurture in students the *ubuntu* spirit, which aligns with his understanding of global citizenship.

Global citizenship education is an ethos or ideology of human unity that can help sustain shared life on this planet. The purpose of education, according to Ikeda (2010), is to make people fully human. Becoming fully human means developing the ability to find meaning in life and situations and utilize that to ignite hope in the individual’s heart and bring happiness to oneself and others (Mino & Heto, in press). Ikeda’s philosophy of value-creating education for global citizenship can work in tandem with Africana notions of humanism to transform Africa toward an egalitarian, communalist, social humanist, and united continent as envisioned by Nkrumah and other Pan-Africanist philosophers and activists. Students of value-creating, global citizenship educational practices can contribute to the realization of Africana humanism and global unity.

## VALUE-CREATING EDUCATION (SOKA)

Value creating pedagogy, as outlined by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), aims to revitalize teaching and learning processes and improve education. He proposes that the creation of value is a uniquely human

endeavor that augments daily life, the process of living, and the joy of learning. Makiguchi introduced his pedagogy to circumvent the deleterious effects of the militarized educational program prevalent in Japan during his lifetime. He develops his philosophy of education in opposition to the militarized education system that taught students that the purpose of their life was to serve and die for the emperor and nation. Makiguchi abhors the devaluation of human life in favor of values, such as the nation, the emperor, and war. He believes in the right to self-determination for all students, not just the privileged. Thus, he argues that the real aim of education is the happiness of the learner in a contributive and transformative personal and social context (Goulah & Gebert, 2009; Gebert & Joffe, 2017). Makiguchi wants education systems to focus on nurturing in all students the ability to create value (beauty, gain, and good) out of any and all circumstances, even the most adverse. Beauty refers to an individual's creativity and ability to produce things, broadly defined, that are pleasing to all human senses. Good stands for contributing to the wealth of others and society. Gain means earning benefit for oneself; this is not restricted to financial benefits only.

Makiguchi delineates six transformative indices, whereby the results of value-creating education can be evaluated. These indices demarcate the progress of humans from self-centeredness toward personal well-being in the context of the greater social good:

- 1) from unconscious, emotional modes of living to a life of self-mastery, consciousness and rationality; 2) from a life of less to one of greater value creation; 3) from self-centered to a social and altruistic mode of living; 4) from dependent to independent modes of living in which one is capable of making principle-based judgement; 5) from a life dominated by external influences to a life of autonomy; 6) from a life under the sway of desires to self-reflective modes of living in which one is capable of integrating one's actions into a larger sense of purpose (Ikeda, 2010, p. 20).

Ikeda has proclaimed the need and provided many guidelines for the development of value-creating processes (Soka). His significant contribution has been an unrelenting declaration of the absolute value of dialogic practices, inner transformation, the equitable evaluation of the rights of all humans to participate in these non-violent processes, and the essence of wisdom, compassion, and courage toward global citizenship for peace. Value creating is a dynamic act of creating something new and unique, not yet apparent. It may be difficult to categorize a newly created value or to name or specify it. The proof is in the motivations, long-range goals, and behaviors. The aim to

nurture and lead learners toward value creation can be implemented and enacted in educational environments wherein mentors and learners share in the process.

## **IKEDA’S PHILOSOPHY OF VALUE-CREATING EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

Ikeda’s philosophy of value-creating education was expanded through interactions with Josei Toda (1900–1958), his mentor, and built upon the system of value-creating pedagogy developed by Makiguchi, Toda’s mentor. Urbain (2010) refers to Toda’s concept of “one-worldism” as a call for people to replace their love for their nation-state with love for humanity. Toda advocates for people to connect and honor the dignity inherent in the life of others. Urbain (2010) argues that Ikeda’s notion of global citizens is the same as Toda’s clarion call for people to relate with each other.

Ikeda’s philosophy of value-creating education for global citizenship contributes to beauty, gain and good, wisdom, compassion, and courage for the betterment of humanity. The values of beauty, gain, and good are creatively manifested as an outcome of education for global citizenship, resulting in individual happiness and contribution to the improvement of society and the world. Value creation takes place in sustainability with the global community of the earth and the universe in humane harmony and harmony with the natural environment. Ikeda’s philosophy of global citizenship education also incorporates the existential phenomena of humanism and human unity: *humunity/hunity* (Williams, 2016, p. 65). This is the basis of Ikeda’s concept of human revolution, which is the inner transformation that leads to dialogue and global citizenship. The end goal manifests as environmental balance, equilibrium, homeostasis, harmony, joy, human happiness, and peace.

Major themes and concepts of Ikeda’s philosophy of education are congruent with Urbain’s (2010) findings of three major components of Ikeda’s philosophy of peace: 1) inner transformation, 2) dialogue, and 3) global citizenship. Additional major themes emerge from Ikeda’s philosophy of value-creating education of authentic student-centeredness, mentor-disciple, teacher self-development, humanism, and contributive and agentic characteristics. Wisdom is an essential element of global citizenship as it relates to the ability to perceive the interconnectedness, interrelatedness, and dependent origination of all phenomena. Global citizenship, as outlined by Ikeda and in tandem with the proposals of his mentor, Josei Toda, aims to

bring people together despite diversities in ethnicity, nationality, political orientation, or any other potentially divisive components of human life.

In his 2014 peace proposal, Ikeda has an entire section on how value creation starts with hope. He uniquely positions hope as an essential component of global citizenship education. Global citizenship then is a way of being; an attitude towards life in which one chooses to remain hopeful while manifesting their humanity. Ikeda's understanding of global citizenship is based on hopeful wisdom, compassion, and courage emerging from the processes of value creation and human revolution. He explains how these elements work together in a 1996 address he gave at Teachers College, Columbia University:

1) the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living; 2) the courage not to fear or deny difference but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures and to grow from encounters with them; 3) the compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places (2010, pp. 20–1).

In the Columbia speech, he presents the model of altruistic global citizenship orientation as exemplified in the actions of Bodhisattva Sramana: encouraging others by addressing them with kindness and concern through dialogue, giving alms and assistance to needs, acting on behalf of others, and joining and working together with others. These models form the basis for his proposals in the 2014 peace proposal for a development summit, educational program for global citizenship toward youth empowerment through decent employment for all, active participation in problem-solving, and youth exchanges (Ikeda, 2014). His action proposals encompass practical economic, as well as philosophical, imperatives based on the belief in the inherent dignity, respect for and right to human life. His educational targets include universal access to primary and secondary education, elimination of gender disparity, and global citizenship education emphasis on environment, development, peace, and human rights.

The theme of global consciousness is one of the most challenging and intractable components of global citizenship education—the transcendence of nationalism and the nation-state. This is a common reality of daily life: the reluctance, unwillingness, or sheer ignorance of how to think beyond one's global location. This has also been a political impediment to Pan-Africanism and the creation of a United States of Africa as proposed by Kwame Nkrumah and supported by Ikeda in his 2001 peace proposal (see Urbain 2014, p. 137–140). African politicians have been reluctant to relinquish their country

boundaries even though they were artificially created under vicious colonial onslaughts.

### **IKEDA, NKRUMAH, AND AFRICANA HUMANISM**

Through numerous dialogues with African leaders, ambassadors, and cultural personas, Ikeda has bolstered his claim for Africa as the continent of the twenty-first century. In a published dialogue with Hancock and Shorter (2017), he stated:

Africa is the spiritual home of jazz and the cradle of humanity. I have long declared that the twenty-first century will be the Century of Africa and have promoted increased exchange with Africa. The twenty-first century cannot be prosperous unless humanity's place of origin prospers (p. 167).

As Africa emerges as the continent of the 21st century, based on history, culture, and global citizenship education, the expectation of magnanimous contribution to world peace is enhanced. Nkrumah was excited about this potentially galvanizing role for Africa and the gifts that the African personality had to offer the world in terms of humanism, communalism, and a politically-conscious spirituality of consciencism to combat the western industrial capitalist-imperialist complex of rampant greed, profit, and exploitation (Rodney, 1981). Nkrumah craved the resurrection of African personality, humanism and democratic socialism that would be the fertile soil for continental freedom and development.

How did Nkrumah perceive the usefulness of the idea of the African personality within the framework of his political and economic goals and his vision of Africa for the Africans? His desire to see Africa emerge on the world stage as a viable power was predicated on his vision of the African personality. In his address to the crowd of over 100,000 at the Polo Grounds in Accra on Independence Day, 5 March 1957, he avowed: "We must change our attitudes and our minds...We are going to create our own African personality and identity...Our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent" (1973, p. 21). Martin Luther King, Jr., Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Ralph Bunch, Charles Diggs, Horace Mann Bond, Mordecai Johnson, Phillip Randolph, and other visiting diasporans joined Nkrumah and his cabinet on the platform that day in Accra (Rahman, 2007, 179–80).

In *Consciencism*, Nkrumah explains:

The philosophy that must stand behind this social revolution is that which I have once referred to as philosophical

consciencism; consciencism is the map in intellectual terms of the disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest the Western and the Islamic and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African personality. The African personality is itself defined by a cluster of humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 79).

Nkrumah spoke to the people's capacity and the realities of the prevailing situation of consciousness and strove to inspire a new and uplifting paradigm. Nkrumah envisioned a United States of Africa based on principles of African humanism and Pan-African socialism. His vision so endangered the western imperialist, neo-colonial intentions, and profit motives that they had to stop him somehow. His demise came about due to unpropitious congealing circumstances of domestic disappointments among the Ghanaian population and the hard power machinations of Western intrigue in support of the coup of 24 February 1966 in which Nkrumah was deposed when he traveled out of the country; just as the West had orchestrated the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, a strong and like-minded ally of Nkrumah, on 17 January 1961. Lumumba proclaimed in August 1960: "The African personality must express itself. That is what our positive neutralism means" (Skurnik 1968, 320). The possibility of a Ghana-Guinea-Congo union was an anathema to the West. African unions had to be deterred at all costs. Lumumba, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. were all touched by Nkrumah's vision, and all died by the bullet.

Nkrumah became acquainted with a leftwing set in New York. They provided a significant contribution to his philosophical development in their belief that a humanistic approach to revolutionary philosophy placed people before ideology. Nkrumah explicated an African revolutionary form of this humanism in his philosophy 'consciencism.' "As with all the philosophies Nkrumah absorbed during his twelve years in the West, he recast Marxist humanism in the mold of the necessities of Africa's revolution...The revolution exists for humanity; humanity does not exist for the revolution" (Rahman, 2007, p. 84).

Nkrumah's vision of 'socialism' for Africa was not that of the Stalinist state-controlled monolith. His socialism approximated the structures of European social democracies more than any Soviet or Maoist declarations. His experience of participation in the Father Divine movement in New York influenced him greatly. Father Divine espoused the "promotion of a socialistic ideal based on the innate human capacity for utopian goodness. Nkrumah

inserted this innate capacity into his concept of African personality and consciencism” (Rahman, 2007, p. 65–75).

Historical, cultural consciousness served as the underlying foundational component of the African personality in its geo-psychological and geo-ideological formations. To be rooted in one’s place and sense of history provides the creative soil from which cultural adaptations emanate. Also, one’s situation, location, or physical placement in the diaspora, and the distance from loci of Africanity or the proximity to westernized/Europeanized demographic centers of influence impacted the subsequent African and diasporic personality formulations. Nkrumah extolled the occasion in April 1958 when he hosted the first Conference of Independent African States in Accra: “...I felt that at last Pan-Africanism had moved to the African continent where it belonged. It was an historic occasion...The African personality was making itself known” (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 136).

Ikeda’s concept of global citizenship, which entails a broad view of the cosmos linking all humanity combined with Nkrumah’s view of the galvanizing role of Africa and the diaspora, holds the promise of a more united world view to come. If Nkrumah had succeeded in leading Africa on to the world stage as an egalitarian, communalist, social humanist, united continent, the world would truly be a different place today.

## **HOPE FOR THE RISE OF AFRICANA HUMANISM**

Value-creating education for global citizenship has a great role to play in efforts to enhance the educational experiences of African students. The youth are the only future. It is imperative to awaken in them the desire to live contributive lives based on the fundamental principle of respect for human life and human unity. Value-creating education can inspire youth to identify and counteract the root causes of violence, poverty, discrimination, and hopelessness in their lives, homes, schools, and communities, through the creative commitment to dialogue to facilitate the transformation from a culture of violence to a culture of peace. This revitalization can enhance interpersonal human relationships throughout the diaspora on the individual, familial, and global levels.

Ikeda’s human education philosophy and global citizenship education provide a path for achieving Africana humanism and global unity envisioned by Nkrumah, Lumumba, and DuBois. It offers people, especially the youth, the means of developing a healthy appreciation of life. When humans feel good about themselves, there is hope, belief in opportunity, and enhanced life chances. A forward-looking state of mind and attitude can emerge. A primary



component of value-creating practice for global citizenship is to nurture this attitude through educational activities. The dominant-negative paradigm can be changed through educational actions with a conscience.

Ikeda makes his philosophical contribution toward human unity and interrelatedness from his stance as a man of the East and from the influence of Buddhist thought. Eastern philosophy extols the unity of all phenomena. The capitalist West has lauded a dogma of rugged individualism, individual rights, and liberties. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* applauded a me-first, divinely ordained personal, pull-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps belief system (Weber, 2003). Independent thought and action remain elements of global citizenship education within the underlying frame of a unifying consciousness, not an egoistic selfdom above all else. The realization of interconnectedness leads to individual freedom and liberation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Value-creating education for global citizenship embodies an underlying philosophy that reinforces the importance of each human being in holistic oneness with the environment. The humanity of unity in diversity: *ubuntu*. Education for global citizenship has the potential to improve the quality of life, enhance inter-ethnic group relations, foster cross-cultural harmonious interactions, and lessen inter- and intra-group violence aiming toward the institutionalization of a culture of peace. Regional unities such as the African Union can be based on a firm foundation of educational practice, which will direct the youth toward self-esteem and social purpose. The Africana heritage of holistic traditional philosophies and practices often celebrate the oneness of human life and the environment, including nature, the importance of the ancestors and cultural traditions, and history (Williams, 1980).

Value-creating global citizenship education curriculum models, ethos, and spirit can enhance opportunities for the happiness of lifelong learners. Happiness is based on advanced, in-depth, caring, and insightful learning activities that relate to family, local communities, and the global world. Global citizenship orientation can appeal to Africana youth who too often find the current educational practices to be irrelevant and counterintuitive to daily realities and needs. Curriculum and extra-curricular activities can be designed to promote maximally optimum conditions for value creation. Human-unity-minded educators need to collaborate to create a new wave of educational practices toward fostering happier students who would follow and implement their dreams. The goal is to create a global society in which all are valued, imbued, and armed with resilience and

contributive lifestyles. Structural and institutional change has its rewards, but a fundamental change, originating from within, is essential to attaining this goal. This is what Ikeda terms human revolution: individuals have the choice and, hopefully, the chance to transform their inner state of life. There is a crucible of value-creating potential, a cauldron of capabilities existing within each person. Global citizen education can add to young people's repertoires of coping skills and enhance international cooperation.

The youth are our only future. Reawakening the love of life in local communities based on the fundamental principle of respect for human life and human unity can inspire youth. Identifying and counteracting the root causes of violence through the creative commitment to dialogue can facilitate the transformation from a culture of violence to a culture of peace. The factors that need emphasis and further examination are those which unite us. From what we have in common, we can further build and sustain unity and united action.

The prevailing and dominant global materialistic pattern veers us away from Africana humanism. We will lose our youth if we do not correct these contradictions and inequities. Our focus must be on the bestowal of the heritage of resilience upon our youth. Nothing can be perpetuated without the youth on board. It is all up to them now. The recognition, maintenance, and perpetuation of the African personality must be a youthful undertaking at this juncture in time. A restored vision of Nkrumah's idea of the African personality and Africana unity, in tandem with Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of global citizenship education, can emerge as an amalgamation force toward liberation. The opportunity derived from projects applying a value-creating-modeled curriculum in the Africana community is well worth advancing, generating opportunities for the advancement of *ubuntu* and Africana humanism on the continent and in the diaspora.

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