

## News & Views

### Toda Institute Annual Report 2013

The year 2013 provided opportunities for our staff to support efforts for peace in Hawai'i, the continental United States (US), Europe, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and many other places. We continued promoting research on the power of music for peace, as well as on nuclear disarmament, conflict transformation and sacred spaces in the context of our Regional Efforts to Achieve Peace (REAP).

Among numerous events that have marked the past year, we were concerned about North Korea's renewed nuclear tests and the tensions between the US and Iran; dismayed by the revelations of Edward Snowden about the widespread spying organized by the US National Security Agency (NSA), and the continued worsening of the relationships between China, South Korea and Japan over the territorial issues; and distressed by the suffering inflicted by Typhoon Haiyan aka Yolanda that struck the Philippines, and the bombing at the Boston Marathon. The situation in Syria was deteriorating further.

We were saddened by the passing away of Nelson Mandela and moved by the tributes to his legacy that came from throughout the world. He will remain an iconic champion of nonviolence and forgiveness who left an indelible mark on human history. Some say that his choice of nonviolent strategies might have been more pragmatic than ideological in the complex and decades-long process of freeing people from white minority rule, but nevertheless, together with Gandhi, King and a few other heroes of peace and justice, he will remain a great source of inspiration for our work at the Toda Institute.

We live in very challenging times and we appreciate the fact that we can contribute to research and policy for global peace through the activities of the Toda Institute. A list of our efforts in 2013 follows:

#### **Conferences**

In the context of our Regional Projects to Achieve Peace (REAP), the following conferences took place:

“Between Nonviolent Conflicts and Reconciliation: An International Workshop Addressing Deadly Conflicts in Asia Pacific” was held in Chang Mai, Thailand, on January 19-20. The two-day international conference generated discussions that illustrated the relationship between reconciliation and nonviolent action in three dimensions: theoretical underpinnings that enable contact points between nonviolent action and reconciliation; types of conflict that give rise or affect the process of reconciliation and nonviolent resistance; and cases of protracted conflicts in Southeast and South Asian regions where both practices of reconciliation and conducting of nonviolent resistance campaigns are witnessed and/or identified. The outcome of this conference will be published in the journal *Peace & Policy*.

The one day meeting “*Psychology and Intractability: Theory Informing Practice*” in February 2013 at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University brought together theorists from psychology and practitioners in conflict resolution. The purpose was to begin an exploration of what can be learned from recent research in psychology about approaches to conflict intractability. Intractable conflicts are those that seem irresolvable; even though possible solutions can be imagined, the disputing parties are stuck and unable to move to any agreement. Two significant points emerged from this preliminary discussion. The first is that the conflict resolution field should be much more systematic about collecting data on what “works” to resolve political conflict, rather than focusing on why processes do not work. The second is that the dynamics in conflicts about which psychology could be helpful include questions of justice, sacred values, and identity. As one participant stated, we should be looking for insights into the “degrees of freedom” around these questions. For example, what is it that allows people, despite having sacred values, to make them pseudo-sacred or to bend on them? What is it about the thirst for revenge that could be satisfied short of tit for tat bloodshed? What is it about group psychology, group preference, tribalism that is plastic enough to move from exclusive to inclusive identities? Many suggestions were made about existing literature on these topics, with a commitment from several members of the group to continue the exploration.

The Toda Institute also supported the following events:

The Chinese Culture University in Taipei, Taiwan, organized a conference entitled “Dialogue Towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Peace, Culture, Education” and I had an opportunity to contribute a paper.

On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement (1998) the University of Ulster organized a seminar on its Belfast campus, together with its affiliated International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE) on April 10, entitled “Inclusive Peacebuilding Locally and Globally.” I was invited as the keynote speaker to offer fresh ideas on how to further implement the original spirit of the Agreement.

Staff and researchers of the Toda Institute participated in the conference of the Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association (APPRA) held in Thailand, Bangkok from Nov. 12 to 14. We sponsored one panel on music and peacebuilding, entitled “Nonviolent Creativity: Musical and Artistic Alternatives to Violence.”

## **Publications**

*Protecting the Sacred, Creating Peace in Asia-Pacific* (2013). This is the first book dealing with this topic and represents a pioneering effort in the field. As I wrote in the preface, I believe this topic is “crucial and innovative” because “[s]acred spaces are at the core of human and environmental security. When we start disrespecting other people’s places of worship and spirituality, we are just a step away from disrespecting their lives, and the path to killing and destruction is close at hand. Focusing on sacred spaces and their protection is an excellent addition to the tools and methods that we have at our disposal to enhance reverence for life on our planet.” Edited by Chaiwat Satha-Anand and Olivier Urbain, it is a result of the conference we held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2011 on a similar theme, in collaboration with the Center for Global

Nonkilling (CGNK) and the Peace Information Center, with support from the Berghof Foundation and Open Society Foundation.

An outcome of the conference we held in Sydney in 2010, the book *Peace Through Tourism* was published by Routledge in 2013. Edited by Lynda-ann Blanchard and Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, it is the first book dealing with this topic. A collection of seventeen chapters by specialists in the field from various horizons, it contributes to the establishment of “Peace Tourism” as an academic discipline. As mentioned on the first page of the introduction, “Peace Tourism is full of promise: the promise of envisioning tourism policy and practice for environmental and human security through international citizenship.” We look forward to the development of this new field of research.

Expanding upon the book *Daisaku Ikeda’s Philosophy of Peace* (2010), and partially a result of the Toda Institute conference that took place in Tokyo in 2009, the book *Daisaku Ikeda and Dialogue for Peace* was published last year, gathering the opinions of eight authors from various continents and backgrounds. The result of almost two years of very careful preparations, *A Forum for Peace: Daisaku Ikeda’s Proposals to the UN* was ready for publication at the end of the year and will be published early next year. It is an anthology presenting the ideas and recommendations concerning the UN by the founder of the Toda Institute, since 1983 through 2013.

Linda M. Johnston was the guest editor of *Peace & Policy* Vol. 18, 2013, entitled *Sports, Peacebuilding and Ethics*, also published in book form. To our knowledge, this is the first academic work entirely dedicated to the links between sports and peacebuilding. In her introduction, she states the main research questions: “Why should someone interested in peacebuilding activities include sports as an integral part of the peace process? What are the programs achieving; how are they being implemented; how are they measuring success; what are the challenges (...)?” Her assessment of the situation is positive: “Sports and peacebuilding activities have clearly made their mark on peace processes. (...) The legitimate concerns first raised about using sports for peace (...) have all been dealt with by the programs in a very creative manner” and she ends with a call for further research: “There are still unanswered questions regarding sports and peacebuilding. Can sports be used to promote justice, as a form of reconciliation, to build compassion for the other, or to reduce violence in the whole society?” We hope this volume will provide inspiration for all those who are interested in exploring the huge potential that structured physical exertion holds for peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

### **Acknowledgements**

The entire staff of the Toda Institute joins me in expressing our heartfelt gratitude to our partners and associates throughout the world who have collaborated with us in 2013, advancing academic research and supporting the emergence of a culture of peace on our planet. We look forward to striving even more together in 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivier Urbain, Director  
Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research  
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