

Toda Institute Annual Report 2008

In 2008 the world has witnessed events of historic proportion that will affect humanity for a long time, for better and for worse. There was the beginning of a change of leadership in the US, and it is to be hoped that some positive results will be felt in 2009 and beyond. A worldwide financial crisis has affected all corners of society, the global economy is in shambles, and unemployment is rising everywhere. The end of the year and the first month of 2009 saw the killing of innocent civilians in the Middle-East, in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Iraq, and violent conflicts continue to plague several parts of Africa and other continents. Throughout 2008, alarming news and reports concerning the negative effects of climate change have helped to raise consciousness concerning our predicament.

For the Toda Institute, 2008 was a year of renewal and transition, but also of mourning and loss. Mr. Tomosaburo Hirano, who was our deputy director, passed away in January, and we all dearly miss him. The first director of our institute, Iranian-born Majid Tehranian, was appointed Senior Research Fellow, and Olivier Urbain from Belgium became the second director in April. A summary of our main activities follows.

Conferences

Meeting of the Toda International Advisory Council in Leuven, Belgium, July 19

Our meeting followed the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) conference that took place in the same city, and in which many members of our council took an active part. During our meeting, attended by more than thirty international scholars, the new director was inaugurated and meaningful exchanges were conducted.

Conference on “Facing Climate Change with a Renewed Environmental Ethic” Honolulu, USA, 21-23 November.

Twenty-five climate change research experts from fifteen different countries, coming from all continents, gathered for three days in Hawaii. Representing the sectors of government and law, business and civil society, they all agreed upon the “Honolulu 2008 Declaration” as a result of serious and sometimes passionate discussions. A collective book presenting their ideas and insights will be published in 2009.

Plans for 2009 and 2010

In 2009, the main conference will be on Dialogue, and in 2010 about Global Governance. Toda Institute members will also participate in several conferences planned for 2009 in Tokyo, Tunis and Honolulu. The next meeting of the Toda International Advisory Board will be held in 2010.

Publications

Book Series

Working closely with the authors and editors, the Toda Institute ensured the publication of three books in 2008, *Global Obligations for the Right to Food, Challenges to Global Security*, and *Music and Conflict Transformation*. A brief synopsis of each book follows.

Global Obligations for the Right to Food: Another World Is Necessary: Human Rights, Environmental Justice, and Popular Democracy edited by George Kent (Rowman and Littlefield 2008). This volume presents concrete suggestions concerning various actions that can be taken by individuals, governments, and non-governmental organizations to ensure that people everywhere have access to adequate food. It emphasizes that in a world where a large portion of the population is suffering from malnutrition and hunger, and at the same time a growing number of people are suffering from obesity, not only government leaders but also the global community of ordinary citizens need to face their responsibilities. This book was prepared by a Task Force of the Working Group on Nutrition, Ethics, and Human Rights of the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition.

Challenges to Global Security: Geopolitics and Power in an Age of Transition, edited by Hussein Solomon (I.B. Tauris 2008). This volume explores the combination of three major forces driving major changes in our world, namely globalization, regionalization and democratization. Global security concerns are felt locally in all parts of the planet, and the chapters in this book focus mainly on the USA, Latin America, South Asia, South East Asia, Europe, Russia, the Middle East, and Africa. Various aspects are analyzed, from religion and religious fundamentalism to socio-economics, politics and human rights.

Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics, edited by Olivier Urbain (I.B. Tauris 2008). In this volume, thirteen writers from all continents share their views on the power of music and the ways in which it can be used for peace. It contains a chapter by Johan Galtung, one of the founders of peace studies, and an exclusive interview of U.S. folk legend Pete

Seeger. Various aspects are explored, theoretical frameworks and political implications by academic experts, musical uses in healing and education by therapists and educators, as well as actual experiences by professional musicians.

In 2009, a book on “anti-racist discourses” edited by Mark Alleyne, as well as *The Challenge of Abolishing Nuclear Weapons* edited by David Krieger, will be published by Transaction. In addition, as mentioned above, the results of our Climate Change conference will also be published.

***Peace & Policy* Vol. 13, 2008**

The thirteenth issue of our annual journal, *Peace & Policy* was devoted to “Peace Journalism in Times of Wars,” and was edited by Majid Tehranian (editor-in-chief), Susan Dente Ross (guest editor) and Deva Temple (associate editor).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the founder of the Toda Institute, Daisaku Ikeda, for his continued support. My heartfelt gratitude also goes to the more than 500 members of the Toda Institute Advisory Council, and to all the friends and colleagues who have supported our work in 2008. Finally I would like to express my appreciation to the staff of the Tokyo and Honolulu offices for their outstanding work.

I humbly ask for your continued support in 2009, as we reaffirm our commitment to the enhancement of “Global Peace and Policy Research” through the promotion of “Dialogue of Civilizations for Global Citizenship.”

Respectfully submitted,

Olivier Urbain, Director,
Toda Institute for Global
Peace and Policy Research,
19 February 2009