

## **May 15, 2023**

### **Interview with Hirotsugu Terasaki**

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#### **Summary:**

The interview was undertaken through a translator provided by Soka Gokkai International (SGI), and the transcript was lightly edited to ease understanding. Additional comments were included in footnotes for clarification after the interview. This document summary was generated by an artificial intelligence language model and was reviewed by a Wilson Center staff member.

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#### **Contents:**

Transcript - English, Japanese

**Michal Onderco:** So Mr. Terasaki, thank you very much for joining this interview. And I want to start about your personal background. How did you become interested in topics of peace and security in general and nuclear weapons in particular?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** So I think while I was a student, I had several personal interests, especially in this field, too, as one of my interests. So when I started working for Soka Gakkai as staff, I was also working together on a volunteer-basis with youth members of Soka Gakkai, especially in the *heiwa*, the peace movement, because in the 1970s, we then also Soka Gakkai, as well as in society, the peace movement was really, sort of, expanding its scale. So, that time I was together with other Soka Gakkai youth members trying to interview the victims and people who actually experienced the war. And as us, the generation who haven't experienced the war, we thought it is very important to get the personal sort of face-to-face interview, to get back to experiences of those victims and those who have experienced the war. And that was, we thought, a good opportunity for us to learn as well as to record their testimonies. So that was really to listen to them, transcribe it and keep them as record. So that was probably the starting point of mine. To work for this peace movement.

So for 12 years, in those days, we have visited all the prefectures of Japan. And all the experiences were compiled into a book. And the book amounted to 80 volumes of books of testimonies, which was published. And, I think for the latter half of these [80 volumes], I served as secretary general of this movement. It was on a volunteer basis. And so I also visited many prefectures and cities and villages and I also attended to interview the hibakusha, the A-bomb survivors, as well as the ex-soldiers who actually committed various, sort of, violent acts in China as the assailant. So, it was a very rare opportunity for them to share their experiences in China and so those were also very meaningful activities, we thought.

So actually these 80 volumes cover about 3,000 testimonies of the people who had various experiences during the war.

So that was really the starting point of really starting among us, the members of Soka Gakkai, to really take off for the further strengthening of the peace movement among young members.

So, from my personal point of view, the war and the very experience of the victims' testimonies have become firsthand. And I really sort of empathized with them, rather than taking war or conflict as an abstract concept. And it is actually looking at, and interviewing, and talking with the war victims or the people who actually committed atrocities in China, and also the victims and the survivors of the atomic bombings, individually one by one, which actually gave me the actual feeling towards war. Which actually gave me a lot of impact for the rest of my life.

**Michal Onderco:** So, Soka Gakkai is very active when it comes to nuclear disarmament. And, to sort of understand your motivation, to be involved in the topic, I would like to ask you how do you view the role of nuclear weapons in the world today?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** First of all, we haven't changed our stance towards nuclear weapons.

So I think the peace movement as well as the nuclear abolition or nuclear disarmament movement started with the second president of Soka Gakkai Josei Toda who made clear his declaration in front of

the 50,000 youth who assembled in 1957.<sup>1</sup> And in his speech, he said it is his will to be in the hands of the young people as the successors, to really [advance] the abolition of the nuclear weapons as his will. And because it is the nuclear weapons, he said, [that] deprives the right to life of humanity. And this was in the midst of the Russian-American arms race for nuclear weapons escalating. And he said, well, we call it a declaration, but that was really the starting point for the movement. So for the movement of this peace movement, as well as the anti-nuclear and the nuclear abolition movement.

And the third President of Soka Gakkai, Mr Daisaku Ikeda, expanded it. And actually, that was the time that the youth members of the Soka Gakkai voluntarily carried out the movement to the further stage. And at this moment, the essential stance of Soka Gakkai, including myself, hasn't changed, it has been always [been] the consistent concept of our thinking that the nuclear weapons are absolute evil. And we do not accept any logic of promoting deterrent, or the deterrent-based security. And because that is like humanity is taken hostage, and it is an existential threat to the whole of humanity. [So, under such circumstances, Mr. Ikeda has been calling for the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons since the late 1960s, by issuing various statements. In that sense, our activities have been consistent up until now and shaped around the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).]

**Michal Onderco:** In the period, especially over the last 30 years, some would say that there have been major successes won, like the decrease in the number of nuclear weapons after the end of the Cold War. There are others who also highlighted there have been major failures in this field, in this period. In your view, what do you see as the biggest failure in this field since the end of the Cold War?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** I think first of all, if you say that [there was] failure, I think the bottom line is whether they share the view that nuclear weapons should be abolished. Because there are NPT as well as TPNW, they both talk about how the final goal is the world without nuclear weapons.

However, their view, or especially the NPT side view, as well as how many people actually think, is, for the time being it can't be helped, the nuclear weapons would stay and should stay and we have to make some adjustment. Rather than right away abolish them. And that is the greatest concern for me.

I think the TPNW is under such circumstances, it was inevitable that people who have the strong desire to abolish nuclear weapons actually sort of came to think of the TPNW, which was actually enacted. I don't want to use whether it was a success or failure and what is the failure. But what I'm really worried about, or have a concern is this: nuclear weapons existence, and to use nuclear weapons, and nuclear weapons themselves actually existing in the world. The sense of crisis or sense of urgency [over this] has been fading, gradually, that is the greatest concern for me. So TPNW actually taking up this discussion from the humanitarian aspect to start with the discussion... I think this was a very logical step and logical argument to incorporate the humanitarian aspect of this discussion.

**Michal Onderco:** I want to ask two follow-up questions to this. The first one is: why do you think that the whole discussion of TPNW emerged relatively late? It only emerged around 2014/2015. Why didn't it come earlier? And my second question: do you think that the war in Ukraine makes it easier for people to understand the need to abolish nuclear weapons? Or is it a sign that actually nuclear

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<sup>1</sup> On September 8, 1957, second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda made a declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons at a gathering of 50,000 youth members in Yokohama. <https://www.joseitoda.org/vision/declaration/>

deterrence works? Because people interpret it in different ways and I want to know how Mr. Terasaki interprets it.

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** For the first question, I think that after the end of the Cold War, I think the disarmament movement actually was sort of low profile and the young and brilliant youth or activists, shifting their movement's focus more to environment [issues], rather than disarmament, or to climate change later. And I also felt that sort of shift or that change. And so, it took some time to come back to nuclear disarmament and to be more focused to come back [to this issue] in the 21st century, it took some time and the people, especially in the non-nuclear states, no nuclear weapons states, they actually had the various discussions and I was very close to watch and sort of participate in such discussions and it was gradually coming down to the [fact that] the focal point should be human and humanity and this humanitarian aspect should be the core of the discussion of disarmament.

So I think ICAN was established in the year 2007. And the main body was IPPNW, in the beginning of that year. And that time, Dr. Tilman Ruff from Australia, who was the [co-founder], and the first executive of ICAN, visited me, and persuaded me to become an international partner. Soka Gakkai or SGI, when he came to Japan, and he was really actually sitting in that chair as you are [all chuckle]. And in that we actually were commemorating the 50th anniversary of Mr. Toda's declaration against nuclear weapons, in the year 2007. And we actually in the commemoration of 50 years anniversary, we started the People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition, or a world without nuclear weapons or nuclear abolition in that year, and that was actually proposed by Mr. Ikeda and we actually talked about our respective activities, we had the thorough understanding of each other and our goal we share. So, we discussed: now is the time that we have to regain the power for the nuclear disarmament once again, from civil society, especially incorporating the youth leadership. Dr. Tilman Ruff actually told me, please, especially the SGI has the very wide constituency of the young people, so please come and join us. So, I was persuaded. And so, we became an international partner of ICAN. That was a very big movement, I think, that ICAN made in the world arena especially in the field of disarmament. What was the second question? [The situation in Ukraine.]

The first thing is that I'm also concerned about the development in Ukraine. And so is Mr. Ikeda, the SGI President. And he has actually issued three statements regarding the Ukraine crisis. One was July last year, just before [the Tenth NPT Review Conference]; [then] in January this year. And in April, that is, just before the G7 [Summit]. And that is the latest proposal of Mr. Ikeda.

And in his proposal, he consistently proposed to stop the fighting, the ceasefire and to stop the war, as well as, in order to reduce the risk of nuclear war or nuclear conflict, [to adopt a policy of] no first use (NFU), he actually proposed [it] three times since July last year. And as you know, that there are criticisms against no first use, they say, "That's not nuclear disarmament." However, Russia is currently still threatening the usage of nuclear weapons. So, the trend in the international arena is, rather than disarmament, is arms race, and in order to really reduce the risk in the usage of nuclear weapons, I feel that it is very important, we discuss to recognize the value of no first use of nuclear weapons in order to immediately reduce the risk of nuclear war. And that's the reason why I think that Mr. Ikeda proposed it. And this morning, just before I came here, I was discussing with my colleagues how we can actually utilize the NPT PrepCom coming quite [soon] and to have some kind of activities for this issue.

So, whether I think the situation is, as you've said, that there are two dividing opinions. The one is; there are more people talking about the disarmament or some people are saying that it is important to

keep under the umbrella of nuclear weapons. And it was quite interesting yesterday as NHK actually had this one-hour discussion program, and that is called the Sunday Discussion, and there are five panelists in the discussion and all-in-all three out of five were for disarmament, nuclear disarmament, but two out of five were for extended deterrence.

And so, which direction Japan is going in is not clear, but it is clear that the conservative group, of course, they actually feel that they are carrying out the responsibility of the national security, but their concept is really trapped, they have this fixed idea of the security is deterrence. Deterrence is absolutely necessary in their mind. So, we should actually sort of talk about in more details or more sort of the logical way of thinking of whether the deterrent logic can really work, whether it is very effective or whether it is very beneficial from the diplomatic point of view, we have to do that in a very accurate and very logical and the very detailed way from the civil society, we should carry out such discussions. Otherwise, if some people feel that it is necessary to carry out the extended deterrent or we should have the deterrent to be more accelerated, if that will become the trend and the mood of society, it will be very dangerous. Therefore, I understand the argument of the people who carry out the nuclear abolition, nuclear disarmament. And however, the people who are still worried and who are still trapped in this mindset of deterrent working for security, I think we have to really consider that part too. And to come up with some way that we can really persuade those people too and come up with a very wise or the good way of approaching them.

**Michal Onderco:** When you look at the role of Soka Gakkai within Japan, and trying to influence what Japanese government does in different international settings, do you think that your organization has impact? And how do you assess that? What's the metric that you use to think about whether you deliver impact?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** So, of course we have to measure from the various points of view, but in the background administrators and politicians, well, of course they are different, but politicians cannot carry out all their political work without the support of administration, the bureaucrats. And because they don't have their own think-tanks, and therefore, in many cases they have to depend on the support of the administrators. And I think, so far, it took so long and then still probably not sufficient for the civil society to have dialogue and have discussion with administrative as well as the political sort of executive part of the government.

So I think, as you probably know, that we actually support Komeito party, which is the sort of middle way or middle [of the] road one, but the junior partner of the current government, leading party. We feel that it is important for us as citizens of society to be engaged with politics, and probably it is natural in your country or other parts of the world. But in Japan, we actually, as our belief, uphold human rights and peace, of course, as well as the disarmament. So by supporting the Komeito party, we try to impact on the policies of the government.

**Michal Onderco:** And do you feel that you're successful? [all laugh] For the record, Mr. Terasaki showed about three inches.

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** Well, of course, they will have to wait for some more years to actually judge and evaluate whether it was a success or not. However, I feel that up to date, we can actually value [positively evaluate] the efforts of the Komeito party so far to contribute to the Japanese society.

Especially two things I feel are very good. Rather than each detail, from the societal point of view, for Japan. So one of the contributions of the Komeito party is because the supporters are grassroot-level, ordinary citizens so they actually are obliged to give the explanation [to them], they have the accountability to explain to those ordinary people what is going on, what are the policies.

I also feel there was another aspect of change brought by the Komeito's efforts. Of course, it's not only us, but the Komeito also worked as the go-between between, I think, the NGOs and the civil society and the local government or administrative, central government's administrative structure. I think in the past because of the ideology of, for example, disarmament, the bureaucrats and administration sector didn't really want to have any kind of dialogue or discussions with civil society. But the Komeito party actually tried to sort of mediate both sides. And they will also participate as well as invite the foreign ministry, especially in the intersection of arms control, or disarmament and so on. They don't usually agree with each other, but at least they can come together to the table to discuss and exchange views. That was another commendable role, I think.

**Michal Onderco:** And do you think that your partnership with ICAN helps you to get more impact on the international level? Or more success on the international level?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** I think it worked well for both sides.

So first of all, I think one of the greatest successes or the great thing about the ICAN I really respect is that for the last 10 years, they have inspired and empowered the young generation. So they have developed their ability and their knowledge. And to get these findings and scientific data as well as the discussion skills. They actually negotiate with the various diplomatic corps of the various countries. That was really wonderful. And I think [the members of SGI] have been very much inspired by their acts too.

I think after 15 years of its establishment, I think, probably, the second decade of ICAN, they are required or have more universality or more diversity and they, I think, should have more effort to expand its supporting people and of course, real society is getting very complicated, so it might be not that easy, but that is the effort probably required of the leadership of ICAN. But I have a great respect and evaluate very highly their action, commitment and their efforts for their goal.

**Michal Onderco:** So you mentioned, just now, that in your view, ICAN should spend energy in expanding its base, and it's geographical variety. Which are the geographical localities, or which are the constituencies, let's say, where, in your view, ICAN needs to be more active and needs to expand more?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** Well, first of all, certainly there has been a trend, but the Global South is now the area, where SGI has been working together with ICAN to carry out the promotion of TPNW in the Caribbean States. And those countries are very small and relatively poor states, and therefore they cannot actually spare many people to tackle with disarmament or TPNW. The information is lacking. So we should really support those countries to realize what is the actual picture surrounding the nuclear weapons and nuclear status. And, by doing that, SGI staff actually worked so hard so that they have actually sort of the brought, many Caribbean States to sign and the ratify the TPNW.

And I think those very thorough and very sincere approaches to Global South nations are very much important. And we have been encouraged by those activities. And we should actually carry out such activities in the Global South. And although they are small countries, they have a vote in the United Nations, and of course, most of their human resources are more inclined to the economic area. However, I think it is important to consider the situation but at the same time, encourage them to carry out the nuclear disarmament.

Also, very importantly, the nuclear-weapon-states. We have those approach the civil societies of nuclear-weapon-states, to really raise the awareness and the actual understanding of nuclear weapons and what is nuclear weapons. And I think SGI has been always promoting, one of the nuclear disarmament tools is education, education is very important. We have been engaged with various educational activities to promote nuclear disarmament, we have been doing, we are doing, and we are going to continue.

**Michal Onderco:** I was intrigued that you mentioned that you helped a number of countries in the Caribbean with the technical process leading to ratification of the treaty. And I was wondering if you could give me a little more example. Did you work through ICAN? Or did you work directly with them? Was it mainly about providing expertise? How did that work look like?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** So I think it was started by the ICAN requesting us SGI to support the promotion of TPNW in the Caribbean area.

**Michal Onderco:** When Mr. Terasaki says support, he means financial support?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** We haven't done any financial support. But we support it. So, we agreed to the ICAN's request. ICAN really wanted to promote the recognition and understanding of TPNW in those areas. So actually, the experts, the two, I think the experts from SGI are ladies, women, and they actually organized a conference in one country and requesting all other countries, or neighboring nations to participate. And that is the base.

And before and after that conference, or meeting, they actually provided various materials, and also the data and such to help them to understand TPNW and what kind of significance TPNW will bring each country, that was also explained. And I think the financial support, that we haven't given the financial support, per se, but we actually helped cover the traveling cost of the representatives coming from neighboring countries [..]. We have actually assisted with that.<sup>2</sup>

**Michal Onderco:** I'm surprised because in its annual report, ICAN lists SGI as one of its financial sponsors. And this is why I'm surprised to hear that SGI has not given finances.

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** So actually also the main support composition of SGI is financial support for ICAN is like the case in the Caribbean States conference. Like a recent example, there is the Hiroshima G7 Youth Summit, and we actually provided also the traveling cost for [youth from G7 countries and other countries,] who find it very difficult to travel from overseas, and especially from the distant and poor

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<sup>2</sup> After the interview, Mr Terasaki confirmed that SGI provided some funding in order to prepare materials in advance of the meeting, again at ICAN's request.

countries. And so, we supported to cover their traveling. Those are mainly our financial [contributions].<sup>3</sup>

**Michal Onderco:** Can I ask another question? So there's, especially in Europe, there's often a criticism of ICAN that it's very active in... No, let me reword it. There is a criticism of ICAN that it's not enough active in countries like India, Pakistan, Israel, Russia, China, that it sort of focuses on easy targets. So the United States, United Kingdom, France. Do you share that criticism or do you think that it's overstated?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** I don't hold any criticism against that sort of ICAN's activities. First of all, ICAN is a campaign. And so that requires campaigners in those countries to carry out the campaign. So, whether each country, like you listed, or [other] country have such campaigners within the country, and also have the link with ICAN as a whole, that is the main thing.

So the starting point is whether campaigners or campaigner exists in the country and also the campaigner or the campaigner organization can exist in that country, is the one thing we have to think [about] first.

So I think the current status is exactly as you said, I think in those countries, ICAN is not that active, that is the current status.

The sensitivity, the sensibility of ICAN has very European characteristics. Especially it's born in Europe and mainly acting in Europe. But I think therefore the SGI with its headquarters in Asia is very important, to make it a very diversified campaign throughout the world. And that also gives us the different aspects of how we can approach dialogue in different countries.

**Michal Onderco:** So, you mentioned already the activities around the G7 Summit. And there has been a number of other international activities where Soka Gakkai was active, also in different conferences. How do you go about influencing those policymakers? How do you try to deliver impact in those settings? And if for example, what would you say is required? For you to say our efforts have been successful? So, what kind of outcomes would need to happen for you to say we were successful?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** So, are you talking about Japan or the world?

**Michal Onderco:** Either.

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** It might be difficult to talk about the world.

**Michal Onderco:** Ok, then let's talk about Japan.

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** I think they are mutually influencing each other. So probably first let me talk about the nature of our activities so that I can help you understand.

So as you know that we are Buddhist, lay Buddhist organization and that we are based on Lotus Sutra, which is the essence of Mahayana Buddhism, we try to incorporate the teachings and really try to make them as our backbone and internalize them into our things, our mind.

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<sup>3</sup> Information about these activities can be found in the 2019 SGI Activity Report: <https://www.sokaglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/sgi-peace-activities-2019-annual-report-en.pdf>

So really, there is the essence, so the cores, two cores of such teaching. So, in our Buddhist teachings, one of the cores or the backbone or the core points essence of the teaching is [that] any living life, any living being, there is equality and equal dignity for any living being.

[The second point is.] In the Lotus Sutra, I think the status of the Bodhisattva appears for in the first time in this Shakyamuni's teaching in Lotus Sutra and the Bodhisattva's role is to really serve the others, contribute to others. And this is the like altruistic attitude. And in this Bodhisattva, through the Bodhisattva, we try to of course make ourselves shine but also help others to shine. In other words; mutually, we will attain well-being and happiness. That is the characteristics of the Lotus Sutra, on which we actually base our belief.

And in the 13th century in Japan, Nichiren actually founded Nichiren Buddhism. And one of his major thesis or writings is the Rissho Ankoku Ron [On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land] [unclear], which means propagating the true teaching to secure the [peace of the] land. And, so this correct teaching and is through that correct teaching, we will actually accept that we have to improve ourselves, we are going to elevate ourselves. So that, by being a good citizen we can actually contribute to society.

So one of the sentences of his teaching is that, even if you're happy or even if you're fulfilled, but if you look at the neighbor or somebody who's next to you, is suffering from unhappiness, does it bring you real happiness? Can you really ignore the unhappy people surrounding you? So I think, what he has been teaching is; we should act not only for ourselves but for others, and that will bring you the true happiness.

So I just wanted to say that Mr Toda, the second president, really renounced the nuclear weapons, as it is the absolute evil depriving the right to life of humanity and that actually comes directly to this belief of attaining ourselves, happiness [for] ourselves, but for others too. That is the basis of our belief, therefore, the disarmament of nuclear weapons, abolition of nuclear weapons is directly connected to our belief and therefore when we are proposed this, we can immediately support his declaration<sup>4</sup>, because it is closely linked to our belief.

Just to clarify the relationship between the Soka Gakkai and SGI. As you know that Soka Gakkai is a lay religious organization in Japan, that is the societal recognition. And in 1975, as the international organization, SGI was created, to carry out the various activities. And the SGI is an NGO, as well as an FBO to carry out various activities as an NGO, and therefore the Soka Gakkai is a religious organization. But the SGI is a more civil society-based organization and to carry out the civil movement, like working together with ICAN or other sort of organizations. Not only simply the overseas wing of Soka Gakkai, SGI is more like civil organization. And of course, the Soka Gakkai and SGI sometimes overlap each other in some of the areas of activities. But that is basically what it stands for.

**Michal Onderco:** And so if, as Soka Gakkai International, if you're organizing activities, like you are now doing for example, before G7 summit in Hiroshima. Where do you put the yardstick to measure whether your activities are successful or not?

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<sup>4</sup> Mr. Toda's 1957 Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, <https://www.joseitoda.org/vision/declaration/>

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** First of all, our input, for example, if our input will reach policymakers to incorporate in their policies, and our input will be disseminated in society, and also in the civil society, that our input will be shared by the citizens of society. And probably those are the ones we can recognize.

So I told you that we actually cooperated with ICAN to carry out the Hiroshima G7 Youth Summit in Hiroshima. And we have another quite unique set of activities.

So I think there is this G7 Research Center, actually in Toronto University, headed by Professor John Kirton, and the G7 Research Group consists of the scholars and academics and the activists throughout the world. And headed by Professor John Kirton. He personally asked me, because he has been organizing this G7 Research Group meeting, as well as the G20 meeting every year, in the host country. And he actually asked me if it is possible to host at Soka University, together with SGI to have this year's, before the Hiroshima Summit, a discussion meeting. And to give the recommendations to the Sherpas or the G7 Summit secretariat. So we agreed, and we have one day meeting at Soka University. It was very interesting.

And the next day, although it was a one-day meeting, but the next day, the core members actually got together to work out and compiled the recommendations to work out the policy recommendations to be presented to the secretariat and through the secretariat to the Sherpas as well as the Prime Minister Kishida. And of course, that recommendation, actually includes various recommendations including the nuclear issue. And we also talked about no-first-use (NFU) and [that the] no-first-use discussion should be also done at the G7 [Summit]. And also, to not only the P5, but also nuclear weapons dependent states to discuss about the NFU. That was also included in the recommendation. It might be difficult to see the result immediately. However, this is one step forward that I feel it is very important to give this kind of policy recommendation to the government.

And also regarding no-first use of nuclear weapons. Mr. Ikeda made a statement and proposal three times and sort of promoting no-first use in this proposal. And this has been taken up in various news including NHK TV program, and also overseas, there has been a lot of response or reactions. So to some kind of comments on his statement on NFU. I feel the discussions have been extending and have been going around. And there are a number of people who contacted me. And this week also, one European group would like to go further discussing about the no-first use of nuclear weapons in more depth. And for this one year, I feel that more and more people are interested in the effect of NFU and to participate in [it]. We actually participate in various activities and through activities and through media, we have seen some kind of positive move.

**Michal Onderco:** I want to move on to the last part of the interview. And the first question that I want to ask you is where do you see the nuclear field to go in the next years in the future? And you can also make a projection for a very long future like 50 years. And some people find it difficult to think about something that is going to happen in 50 years. So it might be easier. If I ask a question, do you think there will be nuclear weapons around in 50 years?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** First of all, in 50 years, there may be nuclear weapons still existing, or there may be already the move to abolish them. I always keep my hope high.

I think it's always whether you choose hope, [or] whether you are pessimistic. It's always between these two. It's a struggle between these two. And our movement is always rooted on the hope to move forward.

I think the one thing probably quite different feature of Soka Gakkai was, there is, of course, the physical abolition of nuclear weapons might be possible. But now, how to make nuclear weapons is available in the internet for example. And even if we actually discard all the physical weapons, if the people want to reproduce it, it is possible. Therefore, I think, although we are actually sort of promoting the nuclear abolition, nuclear disarmament, but what is important is a process how we can transform the people, people's thinking, people's discipline, people's desire for conquering other people, or in order to fulfill their own desire to make other people destroyed. Even if we destroy others we don't care, or we ignore such sufferings. I think we are fighting. I think against that thinking those ideas, so our movement is in a sense, is a movement to fight [in a] philosophical movement [sense]. And in order to do that, of course, we discard, we abolish nuclear weapons, but in order to do that, education is very important, is essential. And to really support the education and really expand the basis of such people, to increase. Although it seems a long way along, however, we, SGI and Soka Gakkai, we try to continue our efforts to educate the people so that they will share the philosophy of the dignity of humanity.

**Michal Onderco:** So, if I understand correctly, your view is that a world without nuclear weapons is a world where there is also no place for thinking about things like deterrence?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** Yes, at least a world without nuclear deterrence.

In other words, not to choose something which will make the world never [capable of] being restored, never being restored in the first place.

In the process, [restriction and prohibition of not only nuclear weapons, but all other inhumane weapons, must be achieved. At the end, we need to overcome the thinking itself which accepts the existence of nuclear weapons.]

**Michal Onderco:** Sometimes when I speak with people who work for nuclear disarmament, and when I ask them about how do they imagine a world without nuclear weapons, they talk about a world that looks completely different than the world that we have today. So, there is like a fundamental transformation. Others, when I ask them about the world without nuclear weapons, they say 'well, it's more or less similar to the world where we live today, with the exception that there are no nuclear weapons.' Which of the groups would Mr. Terasaki sit in or somewhere in between?

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** I belong to the first one. Because I feel that through this process to achieve the first choice. And which can transform completely; means to transform the consciousness of the people, the thinking of the people, the idea of the people completely. That will actually show the growth of humanity, the development of the human spirit, humanity. So it's going to be completely different.

**Michal Onderco:** Thank you very much for your time. I think this wrapped up my questions. Thank you very much for finding the time to talk to me. I really appreciate it.

**Hirotsugu Terasaki:** I hope it's going to be a good reference for you.