Comparative Research in Global Citizenship Education – Some thoughts on a module based on Soka Education

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Introduction

This paper, written at Soka University, encapsulates some key findings from my research as a scholar of Soka or Value Creating Education. Soka Education is a theory of education that was developed by the Japanese educator Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944) through his thirty years of classroom teaching. It was further developed by Makiguchi's successors Josei Toda (1900-1958) and more recently by Daisaku Ikeda (1928-), who is the founder of Soka Schools and Soka University in Japan and abroad. Ikeda is also a Japanese educator, poet and leader of the Buddhist organization, the Soka Gakkai.

As a Soka University student (1995-1998) and presently as a lecturer at Soka University (2014-2015), I have both studied as well as have personal experience of Soka Education. Further, as part of my Masters and PhD, I conducted observational studies at Soka Schools in Japan from 1996-1998 and in 2002. My research suggests that the key message that Soka education institutions give its students is trust in their limitless potential to develop as global citizens who can lead a contributive life. That is, these institutions aim to foster people who can contribute to their own local community as well as the wider world.

This paper shares some thoughts on my prior research that argues the relevance of this message of Soka institutions for mainstream education. Also, this paper shares some thoughts on a new module developed for my current teaching at Soka University titled 'Comparative Research in Global Citizenship Education'.

Comparative Research on Makiguchi and Gandhi

As a Master's in Education student at Soka University in Japan, my dissertation topic was a comparative study of the educational ideas of Makiguchi (1871-1944) and the Indian political

leader Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). As a student at Soka University I was interested to study Makiguchi's *Soka or Value Creating Education Pedagogy*. Through reading the founder Ikeda's writings, in which he notes the confluences in Soka Education and the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, I was drawn to do a comparative research study on the two thinkers, Makiguchi and Gandhi.

To give a brief introduction to both thinkers as examined through my study, Makiguchi and Gandhi, who were contemporaries, also confronted the authoritarianism in their respective countries. For Makiguchi this was the imperialism and nationalism of the Japanese government, and for Gandhi it was the racism in South Africa and the British Raj in India. Both aspired to transform their respective societies and education played an important role in this transformation. Makiguchi hoped to contribute to this transformation through his education and practice, whereas Gandhi was able to make a major political impact within Indian society through educating the masses who were involved in his non-violent movement. Makiguchi's theory of education, known as the value creating theory, and Gandhi's political philosophy aimed to make citizens more socially responsible. My research study on Makiguchi and Gandhi compares their respective understandings of the notions of 'truth' and 'value' among several other similar educational ideas and proposals of both thinkers. This work has been published in a book titled *Value Creators in Education* (1998, second edition 1999).

For my doctoral thesis at the Institute of Education, University of London, I chose to investigate the relevance of both thinkers to contemporary education. The study conducted a critical examination of Makiguchi's influence in Soka Schools. Similarly, the research investigated Gandhi's influence in a selected education institution in India. The doctoral thesis was a critical and self-reflective examination and lead to a shift in my approach and understanding of the relevance of these dissident thinkers. The following excerpt from my book, *Makiguchi and Gandhi*, published as an outcome of this work summarizes my journey from a comparative narrative on both thinkers (Sharma 1999) to a critical study of the influences and relevance of these thinkers for 21st century education (Sharma 2008).

> One of the key underlying concerns of this study, as well as my previous works (Sharma 1999, 2002), has been to identify the role of knowledge and values in learning that enhances social participation, a theme that transpires in Makiguchi's *value creational ideas*, Gandhi's *sarvodaya*[1] and Dewey's *participatory democracy* (Sharma 2002). Through my previous research I had identified the contributions these thinkers made in their respective societies and education system, in particular, to the issue of knowledge and values. In my book *Value Creators in Education* (1999) I had highlighted Gandhi's Socratic proposal to bring together knowledge and morality through teaching students the lives of people of 'impeachable moral character,' instead of narrating stories that had a moral ending. I began

this present study with a similar disposition (common to Gandhians I have met in the past decade) that Makiguchi's and Gandhi's ideas need to be taught.

However, this study on the use of Makiguchi and Gandhi has presented a fairly complex picture. Although I still agree that Makiguchi and Gandhi were fine figures who unified their thoughts and actions, based on the preceding studies of the Soka and Gandhian educational institutions it can no longer be simply assumed that teaching about them would result in their values being transmitted within the institutions. As viewed in chapters six and seven, along with the ideas of these thinkers, there are other influences that affect values in these institutions, which may exert a more powerful impact than the thinkers themselves.

(Sharma 2008: 115-116)

For instance, my detailed research and observations conducted for more than a decade in Soka Schools in Japan found that along with the influence of the founder Ikeda and his predecessor Makiguchi, there were other factors that impact these schools, such as, the national policies of education. The Soka School curriculum is divided into two parts – the curriculum itself (*kyouka*) and the 'outside curriculum study' (*kyoukagai*). While the *kyouka* follows the national curriculum, there is no apparent influence of Makiguchi or Ikeda in the school curriculum. However, during the 'outside curriculum study', learning includes focus on topics, such as, the teaching of Makiguchi's methods of writing Chinese characters as well as activities enabling students to engage with their own natural environment. For example, the students of the Soka Schools organize activities for environmental protection within their local community. In his work *The Geography of Human Life* (1997)[2], Makiguchi emphasized the interrelationship between the person and natural environment. Influenced by his view, the students of Kansai Soka Schools have been able to successfully engage in conservation activities, such as, protecting the fireflies in the school's neighboring area.

In addition, the Soka Schools aim to foster 'global citizens' understood as 'people of talent that can contribute to the world'. To foster global citizenship, the schools have invited more than 3,000 visitors from abroad over the past years, including dignitaries, presidents of countries, scholars, and peace activists. My observational studies and content analysis of key documents of Soka Schools shows that student's perception of themselves as global citizens who each have the vision to lead a contributive life, is driven by the philosophy and trust placed in them by the founder, Daisaku Ikeda. Further, there is a 'whole school approach' or institutionalization of these values through the similar goal held by the school teachers and heads of schools.

One of Makiguchi's main influences in these schools lies in the normative aspect established by his role as a 'martyr' who died for peace. An emphasis is laid on the individual student's role in contributing to world peace. One of the outcomes of the sense of mission for peace in these schools has been the absence of reported bullying (*ijime*) and school phobia (*futoko*), which are

otherwise key problems for most schools in Japan.

Comparative Teaching on Makiguchi and Gandhi

My research studies conducted for more than a decade on these education thinkers identified some useful results for education in the 21st century. For instance, as pointed out, changes in the hidden curriculum can have a significant impact on the education of the learner.

At the same time the constant challenge I confronted was in seeking the relevance of dissident thinkers in mainstream education. That is, how can we *teach* students to take part as active citizens in their respective communities and societies?

In a recent article I argued the question of whether it was possible to foster active citizenship within classrooms of modern democratic nation states (Sharma 2012). For example, if we take the case of Gandhi, we will find that teaching about him presents a fairly complex challenge. As I had stated previously,

> There can be said to be two Gandhis. The first is Gandhi the person, for whom truth and non-violence was his creed. Then there was the Gandhi who had to play the role of the Mahatma, the moral leader and a nationalist, who had to work through the problematic intercultural issues typified by religious conflicts between the Muslims and Hindus. It can be argued that whereas the former is a 'teachable Gandhi,' the latter and more complex Gandhi has been influential within the recent socio-political activities.
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> For education this opens up a complex number of issues. Take the first Gandhi. Teaching this Gandhi has not been easy. The history of Gandhi has been re-written under changing political powers in India. Further, in the mainstream society the use of Gandhi's values has been contextual. When teaching these values in schools it is a challenge to engage with questions related to the contextual use of values in society. The question also arises as to how do we teach the second, more complex and equally relevant Gandhi? In relation to this we need to ask how we can encourage civic aspirations within classroom teaching, given the constraints of the curriculum, time, discipline and other such factors within mainstream education. (Sharma 2008: 150)

One of my suggestions is to develop research that seeks to question key contradictions and paradoxes which can be identified in a contextual and historical analysis of the value systems of dissident thinkers. My historical-comparative study of Makiguchi, Gandhi, and Ikeda had been concerned to address sociological, pedagogical and political issues. As a generalizable outcome I found that,

> ...by situating such thinkers within their own histories, future research should aim to identify their strategies, beliefs, and behaviours as citizens. Makiguchi and Gandhi did not

provide a single, linear and reductive prescription for the needs of their respective societies, but instead, contended with the complexity of their respective social and educational contexts.
(Sharma 2008: 157)

The benefits of a situated research on dissident thinkers were further described in my recent paper.

> During my work as a researcher at the University of Nottingham, I tutored a module on critical and biographical analysis of texts in a Masters in Higher Education course. Students undertaking project work on this module were concerned with a similar inquiry on the relevance of other thinkers like Paulo Friere and Immanuel Kant exploring key questions, such as: What were their personal histories? Who were they influenced by? In what context did they frame their ideas? These questions allow students to understand the context in which radical thinkers developed their ideas for action. Instead of teaching students that there is a single "correct way" or linear solution to combat social or political issues, these questions stimulate enquiry and imagination to understand the complexities involved in taking political action. In modern day India often Gandhi is blamed for being a 'hypocrite' (especially by those that have not even studied his work). Similarly, Makiguchi and his successors in Japan have sometimes encountered accusations, for instance, by "yellow journalism". This is a failure in part due to a lack of understanding of the fact that contradictions and paradoxes are inevitable when values engage with real world politics. Therefore, a study of the lives of thinkers who were involved in their politics can enable readers to acquire critical understandings in the field of politics and the complexities of political processes in contemporary societies. This is necessary so that citizens can make a sound judgment and decisive action as political actors.

> As an outcome of my research and teaching on issues related to citizenship education, I developed a module for teachers as part of a Post Graduate programme which continues to be run at the University of Nottingham.
(Sharma 2015- in print)

The "Intended Learning Outcomes" of the Post Graduate program is for the teachers to gain an awareness of:

- The educational ideas of the non-Western thinkers, Makiguchi, Ikeda and Gandhi.
- How Makiguchi and Ikeda's "Value Creation Education" can offer benefit in the context of the teacher's own classroom.
- The issues that arise in the teaching of values, such as, Gandhi's non-violence.
- A discussion on a qualitative approach to knowledge and values in Citizenship Education. (The next section elaborates upon this point.)

Ikeda's Contribution to Global Citizenship Education

My study on Makiguchi and Gandhi's educational relevance for the 21st century (2008) lead to my interest in the philosophy and work of Daisaku Ikeda and his contribution to foster youth as global citizens within Soka Schools as well as through other Soka educational institutions and communities.

This section is based on the arguments made in some of my recent studies that examine Ikeda's concept of dialogue and its relevance in teaching global citizenship education in modern democratic nation states (Sharma 2011 and Sharma 2015). Since my work on Citizenship Education was largely conducted as a Research Assistant and Research Fellow in universities in England, my writings were informed by the debates taking place in the nation on this topic at that time. In my study I explored the ontological paradigm underlying the perspective of the 'self' and 'other' in Ikeda's writings and compared it to key policy documents in U.K.

As found, often the argument made in documents on Citizenship Education is that the 'self' and 'other' have scarce understanding of one another's knowledge and values. Hence various policies and documents suggest the need for more knowledge of the 'other' (example Haydon 1997). There is arguably a quantitative approach to knowledge and values. The rationale behind it seems to be that if we know more about the other person, community or society, we are likely to empathize to a greater degree. However, as I demonstrate through examples (Sharma 2011), this may be a limited approach. In particular, because there are memories associated with people and events even within contemporary politics, and just 'knowing' about something does not enable us to truly understand a different perspective. An innovative approach is to take a qualitative and heuristic approach to knowledge and values. Such as, found within Ikeda's philosophy of dialogue. Ikeda's writings suggest that there is a need for an intervention that can bring together the 'self' and 'other' in dialogue to facilitate the individual self's growth and development within such interactions. That is, as argued earlier, greater attention needs to be given to education that enables students to take action based on understanding the 'other', and to develop one's own values and perspectives through the process of dialogue (ibid: 13). This can be termed as a qualitative approach to knowledge and values.

In relation to this key concepts in Ikeda's writings are, 'the oneness of self and environment' (*esho funi*), and 'Human Revolution' (or individual change) (Ibid). To explain briefly, the relationship between the individual and her/his environment in Buddhism can be explained through the concept of *esho funi* in which the word *funi* essentially means 'two but not two'. This signifies the oneness or interdependence of the individual and his/her own environment[3]. According to the Buddhist view that Makiguchi and Ikeda subscribed to, not only is the

individual influenced and shaped by the environment, but also impacts upon it. Buddhism advocates taking positive action in one's daily life preceded by a behavioral change in the individual, which Makiguchi's successors Toda and Ikeda describe as 'Human Revolution'[4]. This resonates with the UNESCO goal of 'Learning to Be', that is one of the pillars of the Jacques Delor's report of 'Learning: the Treasure Within'[5] (Delors 1996). To summarize, Citizenship Education should aim to facilitate genuine dialogue that is based on self-reflection so that we can truly understand the other.

Conclusion – suggestions for teacher's education

During my present teaching at Soka University I have developed a module offered to the under-graduate students in the Faculty of Education, many of whom are aspiring teachers. The module is titled 'Comparative Research in Global Citizenship Education' and one of its aims is to study the contributions of Makiguchi, Ikeda and Gandhi to Citizenship Education.

Ikeda's philosophy of dialogue and proposals on Global Citizens is a core component of this course[6] that revisits the concept of dialogue in Global Citizenship Education. Students get practice in analyzing and constructing arguments related to a study of the essential criteria of a global citizen.[7] The aim is also to provide students with many opportunities for discussion. This includes exchanges between the tutor and students, class discussions among students, as well as many writing assignments (such as, 'Weekly Notes'), which are carefully evaluated with ample comments.

Through a biographical analysis students study the lives of a variety of citizens and their contributions to local communities and the wider world. Tutor lectures and students assignments tell stories of the personal histories of citizens and their political movements, such as, Makiguchi, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Leonardo da Vinci, as well as ordinary, largely unknown citizens. An aspect common to all citizens is that they each have a strong normative aspect, such as, non-violence for Gandhi. The second common aspect is that the study of these people sheds light on their strategies, behaviors, and beliefs as citizens.

Instead of teaching students that there is a single "correct way" or linear solution to combat social or political issues, the lessons are focused around questions that stimulate enquiry and imagination to understand the complexities involved in taking political action. For example, in teaching about Gandhi's non-violence, the students are asked whether they consider non-violence to be a good strategy. Further, students are asked to question whether non-violence would be considered a good strategy if, for instance, Gandhi had to combat Hitler? Based on rigorous class discussions students are introduced to Gandhi's own writing on this topic (primary source), and selected commentaries by other authors (secondary sources). Through using the

method of critical, textual analysis, students are lead to identify varied interpretations on select texts. During the course students are asked to read the original and secondary source writings and to evaluate how their ideas can influence classroom practice in the 21st century. Further, students engage in reflective learning on their own individual role as global citizens and through study of the writings of the founder of Soka University, Daisaku Ikeda.

Through successive sessions, students are exposed to comparative research on the biographical texts of radical thinkers. The sessions focus on the methodology of this study, including, methods used to compare texts, and show how to do a situated analysis of these thinkers within their own time and in the 21st century context. Based on the lectures written materials are circulated and video clips are shown to generate class discussion on different ways of interpreting texts (both written and visual texts). Students work in groups to assess the different insights offered by particular perspectives on global citizenship education and consider the contribution offered by inter-disciplinary approaches.

In conclusion, a comment for future research is that Ikeda's philosophy can be studied, along with other citizens, to develop an educational theory and curriculum that is non-sectarian and an essential element in teacher's education courses. While including theories from the West, this new curriculum would also shed light on theoretical underpinnings for teacher education that stem from Eastern cultures and philosophies. In teacher education courses worldwide there is a dearth of teaching philosophies and pedagogies from the East. The ideas of Makiguchi, Gandhi, Ikeda and many such thinkers must be included in teacher education curriculums so that teachers are exposed to a wide range of perspectives that is truly multicultural. This is particularly important for fostering citizens in modern democratic nation states in the 21st century. Also, this will lead to a more inclusive education that appreciates the values of youth from across the globe. This is a huge task that requires pooling in the expertise of several researchers as well practitioners in the field of education. The Faculty of Education at Soka University can make a significant contribution in this endeavor.

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1 Universal welfare; social good, public interest.

2 For English translation see (Bethel 2002).

3 http://www.sgi-uk.org/index.php/buddhism/oneness

4 http://www.daisakuikeda.org/main/philos/essays-on-buddhism/buddh-humanrev.html

5 http://www.unesco.org/delors/ltobe.htm

6 Ikeda outlines the essential criteria of a global citizen in a lecture delivered at Teachers College Columbia University. These are,

_ The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.

_ The courage not to fear or deny difference; but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and to grow from such encounters with them.

_ The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places. (Ikeda 1996).

7 Nussbaum stresses that it is important, particularly in a Liberal Arts education, for students to get enough practice in analyzing and constructing arguments (see Nussbaum 1997, 2002, 2007).

地球市民教育における比較教育—
創価教育をベースにした授業科目に関する考察

ナムリタ・シャルマ

　本稿は創価教育（または価値創造の教育）に関する私の研究の主要な知見を含んでいる。創価教育は，日本の教育者牧口常三郎（1871-1944）によって提唱された教育理論である。牧口の功績は戸田城聖（1900-1958），そして日本及び海外の創価教育機関の創立者である池田大作（1928- ）によって受け継がれている。主流教育に対する創価教育の妥当性に関する私の長期にわたる調査結果の一つとして，創価の機関，特に，日本の創価一貫教育機関は児童生徒に対する発展的な影響を持つことがあげられる。より正確に言えば，児童生徒が地域社会のみならずより広い世界に対して積極的な貢献をなしうる地球市民としての使命を，各々が持っていることを実感する経験をするということである。他の要因として，この効果は隠れたカリキュラムの中に秘められた試みによって作られる。本稿では，現代の民主的国民国家における市民教育における創価教育の理念と実践の妥当性について論じている。牧口，マハトマ・ガンジー，そして池田という反体制派に関する私の研究や教授を基盤にしたいくつかの考察もなされる。加えて，本研究は本学で私が教える「地球市民教育における比較教育」のクラスに関する考察をも含んでいる。