

## A Special Lecture

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**A**S I was sitting here this morning, I was thinking about this great event we are presenting to the world today. The world is passing through very difficult times. Country after country is falling into the path of terrorist bullets, and we are witnessing a wave of destabilization, particularly in Asia, that is extending from the Caspian Sea out to the Pacific, all the time expanding. Pick up a newspaper any morning and you can see what I mean. If you picked up a paper this morning you would have read about what has just happened in Najf (Iraq). How can anyone kill innocent people at prayer in a mosque? I believe one can recall without difficulty several places and several incidents, until one gets sick of the display of violence and blood. I think the sponsors from Japan and India have done the right thing at this moment, to draw the attention of the world to this memorable place that adores the legacy of Nehru, which ultimately is that nonviolence and peace must prevail. I do hope that the voice you raised this morning will attract the world's attention. World wide there are two competing movements going on. One of course is that of the people promoting violence. While there are the sane peace-loving people everywhere who are raising their voices of sanity. I am leaving tomorrow for Greece to attend a meeting of one such group of people.

This morning is memorable to me for several more reasons. One of course is his Excellency, Mr. Kawada, has brought me a personal letter from Mr. Ikeda, for whom we all have very high regard. It was my privilege to receive him when he came here in 1997. In his letter, he recalls that event and the time when Soka University honored my wife and me, conferring degrees on us both here and in Tokyo. His words are memorable. He writes with a great deal of sincerity and depth on the needs for peace and nonviolence. I am requesting our friend Mr. Kawada to take back to Mr. Ikeda our message that will echo his feelings. We all are with him in spirit. He is one of the leaders of the world who is revered, whose voice is listened to with respect. Therefore, I do hope that he will continue and persist from now on more than ever before.

Mr. Kawada, I have realized from your remarks today how Mr. Ikeda himself concluded from that auspicious land of the Buddha that peace institutes must be established. I am glad that one has been set one up in Japan. In addition, I am glad that you are trying to marry two peace institutes of great importance. Our very worthy friend, Mr. Nanda, has just told us in his remarks what Gandhi stood for, and you coming from the land where everyday, you hear what Mr. Ikeda stands for. With the Gandhi Peace Institutes around the world and the university that you have in Tokyo, I think we can put our heads and minds together to take further this belief and advance this message. I am also delighted Mr. Kawada that you have given me a book that I would like to show everyone here. This is the *Poet's Star* as they call it. The photographs and poems by none else than Mr. Ikeda himself. I think, the beauty of this book lies in three ways. First, I admire the eye of Ikeda, which picks up the beauty of nature. Second, I want to show my respect and say a word of appreciation for his sensitive mind that captures his feelings in poetry. I do not know who translated these poems from Japanese into English, whether Mr. Ikeda did it himself or somebody else. Nevertheless, whoever did it; they did full justice to it. I was just reading one poem which is short, and I would like to share it with you. It says:

life is a battle,  
struggle,  
unavoidable.  
The only choice we can make is  
whether to fight as noble warriors or  
as world peace, bereft of moral scruples.

This is the moral and the message of our gathering here this morning. Mr. Kawada has also brought for me and for all of you, a manuscript of the Lotus Sutra. A while ago, he gave me a photocopy rendered in a beautiful fashion: It intrigued me because it was written in Pali. Thus, until this translation was given to me, I was wondering what the message in the text would be. There is an exhibition on this Sutra being held here in Delhi and I hope you will have the opportunity to visit it. The also the translation (of the text) is given here, it says, "The Sutra depicts the events in a cosmic world, that transcends ordinary perceptions of time and space. The Lotus Sutra presents abstract religious pictorial representations of the Sutra, done several centuries ago. This I think should inspire us." Therefore, all these things put together, whether it is the message from the great thinker and leader Mr. Ikeda, or the reproduction of the Sutra, or the contemporary thinking on Gandhi and the Buddha,

all these put together, I think will receive the attention of all you scholars and thinkers. I hope in the next two days, you will deliberate on them and issue a message to the world, one that would offer hope, that would re-ignite the feelings that we, the inhabitants of planet Earth can live together only in nonviolence and peace.