

**SPEECHES GIVEN AT THE CEC TELECONFERENCE
EVERY EFFORT WE MAKE IN FAITH BRINGS MORE GOOD FORTUNE
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We had a wonderful Central Executive Conference with much dialogue on the development of our organization. In one message SGI President Ikeda sent to the CEC, he said: "Please exert all your strength and resources, and make this conference a new departure. It is very important. Now is the chance for America to grow in leaps and bounds."

Yesterday at Morehouse College in Atlanta, the Gandhi, King, Ikeda exhibition, titled "Building a Legacy of Peace," was opened. Martin Luther King III, the mayor and many students came and viewed the exhibit. Your zone leaders will be bringing back and sharing large photographic renditions of the exhibition and an accompanying video.

Today, I want to share some experiences I had while I was in Japan recently. When I visited Soka University, the beautiful buildings on campus reminded me of President Ikeda's tremendous spirit and appreciation to reply to Soka Gakkai presidents Tsunesaburo Maki-guchi and Josei Toda, and also his far-reaching vision toward the 22nd century and even the 23rd century. I also thought about the struggles of many pioneers, whose united efforts helped create the university.

The American delegation I was with had a wonderful encounter with Soka High School students at their graduation ceremony on March 16. At the ceremony, as President Ikeda entered the auditorium, he asked the students to throw their graduation caps into the air, which they did jubilantly, and invited them on stage, tapping them on their shoulders, one by one. He told them not to forget their appreciation for their parents, brothers, sisters, friends and teachers. He truly encouraged them.

During the ceremony, I thought about the 120 freshmen who will soon enter Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, and I deeply felt how America has a special mission. America is unique in the whole of human history, bringing together every conceivable mixture of ethnicity, lifestyle, political affiliation and economic and social backgrounds. So each of us has an unbelievably important mission to establish peace and happiness in this country.

President Ikeda stated at the graduation that over the last 50 years, he had been sharing nothing but the greatness of his mentors, presidents Makiguchi and Toda. The most important thing is the way of the disciple, he said, for the disciple chooses the mentor. And the greatness of the mentor is determined by what the disciple accomplishes. Because the mentor selflessly leads us to live nobly, we are able to develop unlimited potential and experience what it means to be a Bodhisattva of the Earth.

President Ikeda shared how 36 years ago, he and Mrs. Ikeda visited the site where Soka High School now stands. They relaxed near a creek, ate rice balls and talked about creating a high school there. Through such touching stories, he shared the origins of Soka education.

Now, looking to the far-off future of the SGI-USA organization, I want to encourage everyone to get involved in the upcoming May Commemorative Contribution activity in this historic year and make a great cause for the future. I wholeheartedly thank you in advance for your participation.

Please remember that every effort we make in turn creates our own good fortune.

Chanting daimoku is the important starting point for all our activities to be conducted in a warm, united family atmosphere.

As we continue advancing in our Soka Spirit movement and propagation efforts, the growth of SGI-USA will naturally lead to the expansion of our districts, giving more people opportunities to develop their faith. Let's also create unforgettable family youth culture festivals this summer.

While you are engaged in all these activities for kosen-rufu, please do not sacrifice any aspect of your daily life or individual happiness. Please make sure that you are taking care of your families. I want you to sleep well and have no accidents.

When you are happy, when you are feeling joy and fulfilling your determinations, you can encourage other people. That is how we can raise the next generation—based on our own growth and serving as great examples to others. Let's continue to focus on what I call our three Soka's: Soka Care, Soka Spirit and Soka University, and visit as many of the members as possible, sharing our joy and struggles with them.

All of our activities this year—our focus on the May Commemorative Contribution, propagation, publications promotion, district expansion and family youth culture festivals—are for accomplishing kosen-rufu. They are for nurturing all different types of capable individuals necessary for kosen-rufu.

I thank everyone for all your efforts. Let's win in every endeavor, and welcome President and Mrs. Ikeda back to the United States. Thank you very much!