

Opening Remarks

Jae Kyu Park

President
Kyungnam University

Dear Dr. Yoshihisa Baba, President of Soka University; invited scholars and distinguished guests.

I sincerely congratulate Soka University of Japan, Chinese Cultural University of Taiwan, and Kyungnam University of Korea for jointly hosting here at the Soka Gakkai Okinawa Training Center their first 'Peace Forum'. I would especially like to express my sincere thanks to President Baba for his efforts in making this first forum a success.

President Baba has already delivered a very moving speech highlighting the significance of this inaugural event. So I will keep my remarks brief.

The Soka Gakkai Okinawa Training Center is a monumental place. It was originally a US nuclear missile base. In 1977, thanks to the initiative of Ikeda Daisaku, founding President of Soka Gakkai International, this place was rebuilt as a 'fortress of peace'. Okinawa experienced the bitterness of World War II. So it is no coincidence that our first peace forum is being held here, and under the theme 'Building a Peace Community in Asia'.

This first peace forum is a timely event considering current tensions in the region. North Korea's nuclear and missile provocations have shaken the peace and stability of Northeast Asia. The first North Korean nuclear crisis began in 1993, following North Korea's statement that it was withdrawing from the NPT. A provisional resolution to the crisis was reached through the signing of the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework. Nevertheless, the cycle of tension and respite has been ongoing ever since.

Most recently, the Korean Peninsula is being pushed into an unprecedentedly tense phase. We see strong opposition, and saber-rattling, between the US Trump administration and North

Korea's Kim Jong Un regime. North Korea has threatened a missile strike on Guam, test-fired a missile over Japan, and conducted its sixth nuclear test. It is a highly distressing situation.

For peace on the peninsula and the region, the North Korean nuclear issue must be solved. It must be solved peacefully through communication and compromise. There must never be another war on the Korean Peninsula. To bring a resolution, Japan's active support and cooperation will be needed. In particular, the US is pushing for sanctions and pressure on North Korea, but that must not be the goal in itself; rather it should lead to negotiations to resolve the nuclear issue.

More than anyone, China will have to make more active efforts to convince North Korea to engage in serious negotiations and give up its nuclear weapons. North Korea will have to change its stance, stop provocations and nuclear threats, not exacerbate the situation, but rather resolve the problem through negotiation. Under the current situation, it is essential that all concerned countries gather their wisdom and closely cooperate to set a turning point for solving the problem.

This morning, scholars from Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea will present and discuss on the theme "Creating Future Peace: Inheritance of War Experience." In the afternoon, the focus will be on "Making a Sea of Peace: Collaborations for Human Security."

I sincerely hope that a number of creative proposals may come out of today's discussions, as we all work to revive peace and prosperity in the region.

Thank you.