



Martin Luther King Recording Found In India

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In February and March 1959, Dr. Martin Luther King and his wife, Coretta Scott King, traveled throughout India. Nearly 50 years after that visit, staff at All India Radio discovered a message taped by Doctor King. In it, he emphasizes his intellectual debt to Mahatma Gandhi's message of nonviolent social action.

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MELISSA BLOCK, host:

From NPR News, this is All Things Considered. I'm Melissa Block.

MICHELE NORRIS, host:

And I'm Michele Norris. In India, researchers have found a long-lost speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The Indian government, along with the U.S. State Department, has been planning a 50th-anniversary celebration of King's visit to the country. They found a recording of a broadcast King made to the people of India on that trip in 1959. It's widely known that Dr. King was a great admirer of Gandhi and borrowed his philosophy of nonviolent resistance. Gandhi relied on peaceful protest to help free India from British rule; Dr. King used it to promote equality for African-Americans. King took a month-long tour of Gandhi's homeland to see the results of civil disobedience firsthand. By the end of the visit, he said his commitment to nonviolence as a vehicle for change was deeper than ever.

(Soundbite of speech)

Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. (Civil Rights Leader): Since being in India, I am more convinced than ever before that the method of nonviolent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for justice and human dignity. In a world since Mahatma Gandhi embodied in his life certain universal principles that are inherent in the moral structure of the universe, and these principles are as inescapable as the law of gravitation.

NORRIS: And King developed an even greater appreciation for Gandhi.

Dr. KING: Many years ago, when Abraham Lincoln was shot - and incidentally, he was shot for the same reason that Mahatma Gandhi, was shot for, namely, for committing the crime of wanting to heal the wounds of a divided nation - and when he was shot, Secretary Stanton stood by the dead body of the great leader and said these words: Now he belongs to the ages. And in a real sense, we can say the same thing about Mahatma Gandhi, and even in stronger terms: Now he belongs to the ages. And if this age is to survive, it must follow the way of love and nonviolence that he so nobly illustrated in his life. And Mahatma Gandhi may well be God's appeal to this generation, for in a day when sputniks and explorers dash through outer space and guided ballistic

missiles are carving highways of death through the stratosphere, no nation can win a war. Today, we no longer have a choice between violence and nonviolence; it is either nonviolence or nonexistence.

NORRIS: Next month, a delegation led by Martin Luther King III will travel to India to celebrate the intertwined legacies of his father and Mahatma Gandhi.

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