

GLOBAL FRIENDSHIPS FOR PEACE SGI ACTIVITIES REPORT: AFRICA

THE future of the African continent looks bright, as members from Zambia, Kenya and Togo do their part in creating value in their respective countries. Whether in society or at SGI activities, members unite joyously as they work toward revolutionizing their continent.

Matrina Bbuku is a lawyer associated with the Zambian Justice Ministry and an SGI chapter women's division chief. She has been assigned to an NGO (non-governmental organization of the United Nations) project called "Women and Law," which strives to improve women's social condition. As the NGO's representative in Zambia, Matrina conducts research and organizes international conferences, visiting six southern African countries including Zimbabwe and Botswana. During childhood, her father abandoned her mother and siblings. This experience spurred her on to take up the legal profession to improve women's status in society. In 1984, she was introduced to Buddhism by an SGI member, who told her that the human revolution of a single person leads to the betterment of a community, a nation and humanity as a whole. She felt she found what she had been seeking, and decided to practice, joining SGI activities in Zambia during its pioneering stage. Today people praise her contributions and activities both at work and in the local SGI organization.

Masumi Hashimoto Odari, originally a native of Japan, is one among many SGI members contributing to their new communities. After graduating from Soka University in 1986, she pursued her master's degree at the University of Nairobi. In 1990, she began to teach at the school. She has had to face various problems living in a new country for a decade, but now she enjoys her teaching position and being able to contribute to Kenyan society. Kenya's SGI organization has developed to the extent that some 200 members regularly participate in various meetings. Masumi's family consists of her husband, Kesa Odari, a civil servant at the presidential offices, and three children. "Regardless of nationality, I want to advance with the Kenyan people by developing my personality as a world citizen," Masumi said.

Togo, located in West Africa facing the Gulf of Guinea, occupies a narrow strip from north to south. In this tropical environment, the majority of the people are in agriculture, producing cocoa, cotton and coffee. Members of some families live separately in French-speaking Togo and English-speaking Ghana. However, there is no border for SGI members who established the organization more than a decade ago. Ghanaian members have lent their support to the SGI organization in Togo. In August 1995, a general meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Togo Chapter was held. The members are eager to welcome SGI President Ikeda to Africa as soon as possible. □

Compiled from SGI Graphic