

SGI President Talks With Russian Scholars
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The Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences bestowed an honorary membership upon SGI President Ikeda today at the Seikyo Shimbun Building.

Following the ceremony, Dr. Yuri A. Petrosyan and Dr. Margarita I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, director and researcher, respectively, of the institute's St. Petersburg chapter, held a lengthy discussion with Mr. Ikeda.

Dr. Petrosyan said that the people of Russia are now grappling with the most difficult challenge in their history. Empathizing with him, President Ikeda affirmed that no nation or race of people can avoid what Buddhism terms the "four sufferings" — birth, old age, sickness and death — or the "four kalpas" — formation, continuance, decline and disintegration.

Expressing his conviction, though, that winter always turns into spring, the SGI leader said that despite its trying present circumstances, Russia will definitely open a new page of prosperity if its people do not give up.

When Mr. Ikeda asked Dr. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya what she found especially attractive about the Lotus Sutra, which she is an authority on, she answered that it teaches how people can lead a more fulfilled life through developing themselves.

She also said that it expounds gender equality.

Mr. Ikeda agreed that the Lotus Sutra teaches the equality of all living beings and also honors individual differences.

It offers a philosophy, he said, with which people of different races and cultures can, based on mutual respect, grow to understand how to live peacefully together.

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