

## **SGI President Joins European Group Dedicated to Dialogue**

**COURTESY OF SGI NEWSLETTER**

**Salzburg, Austria, March 8**

The European Academy of Sciences and Arts, a community of leading figures whose aim is to contribute to the development of humanity and promote harmony on a global scale, has named SGI President Ikeda an honorary senator of the academy. Mr. Ikeda is the 11th person and the first Japanese citizen to be so honored.

At the conferral ceremony today, Academy Vice President Ricardo Diez-Hochleitner, who is also the president of The Club of Rome, articulated the academy's mission and goal to achieve lasting peace through facilitating dialogue on the European continent. King Juan Carlos I of Spain, Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic, President Árpád Göncz of Hungary, and President Jacques Santer of the European Commission are among the executive advisors of the academy, which was established here in 1990.

Academy President Felix Unger said that since the academy's founding, members have focused on promoting communication among various religions, based on the belief that religion is the key to achieving global prosperity and peace for all humankind. Dr. Unger stated the vital importance of inter-faith dialogue, but said that a fear of foreign cultures and beliefs has prevented this from happening.

He emphasized that the only way to solve the problems facing our world today is through setting aside our fears and striving to understand one another. Now is the time to transcend our differences and engage in dialogue to bridge the gap dividing cultures, he said.

President Unger expressed his wish that Mr. Ikeda's inauguration into the academy will open the door for the Eastern philosophy of Buddhism to join and add to the rich dialogues they have already begun with the disciplines of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Hiromasa Ikeda, Mr. Ikeda's son and a Soka Gakkai vice president, received the award on his father's behalf. Vice President Ikeda read a message from the SGI president stating that global unification is crucial to ensure the future and that cultural exchange between the East and West is the way to achieve this.

Mr. Ikeda further asserted that the coexistence of cultures is the only path toward mutual prosperity and stressed that a new age will be created through fostering a spirit of tolerance and open-mindedness. In conclusion, the SGI leader determined as a member of the academy to promote dialogue toward a 21st century of harmony and coexistence among all humankind.

The ceremony was held in Residenz, a cultural palace, and was attended by some 300 representative academy members from around the world.

Represented organizations include The Club of Rome, All-European Academies and the European Council. More than 50 countries in Europe, North and South America, Asia and the Middle East participate in the academy's wide-ranging scope of scientific and artistic research projects.

**WT**

Title: SGI President Joins European Group Dedicated to Dialogue

Subject: World Tribune 04/11/97 n.3134 p.1 WT970411p01 Salzburg, Austria 03/08/97

Author: SGI Newsletter

Keywords: 03/08/97 Austria Daisaku Dedicated Dialogue Dignitaries European Events Group Ikeda Joins Meetings News Peace People President Salzburg