

NEWSBRIEFS

SOUTH KOREA

SGI President Honored by South Korean County

The Legislative Assembly of Chin Chon County, Korea, conferred honorary citizenship and a certificate of commendation on SGI President Ikeda, Dec. 24, 1997. This was in recognition of his long-standing efforts to promote peace, culture and education globally, and was the first time a non-Korean citizen had been so honored. At the conferral, assembly members acknowledged the SGI's contributions to the welfare of society, singling out the endeavors of the SGI of South Korea (SGIK) to protect the environment.

SGIK sponsored a concert last September aimed at raising environmental awareness and donated books to a local youth center, the county education office and outlying schools. The SGIK also spearheaded a campaign to clean up of the shores of Lake Cho Pyung, located near the SGIK training center in Chin Chon County.

GERMANY

SGI of Germany Commended by City Mayor

SGI President Ikeda received a letter of appreciation on Dec. 22, 1997, from the German city Bingen am Rhein in recognition of the contributions made by the SGI of Germany (SGID) toward restoring Villa Sachsen, designated an important cultural asset.

Mayor Birgit Collin-Langen presented the letter to SGID General Chief Hideaki Takahashi in a ceremony at the city hall. A medal commemorating the 900th anniversary of the birth of the German saint Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179) — a woman from the Bingen area renowned for her inquiry into a variety of subjects — including medicine, was also conferred.

Villa Sachsen currently serves as the SGID Culture Center and is a place where citizens can meet and foster friendships. Originally built in 1843 as a mountain retreat for a family of nobility, it is situated on vast wooded grounds and commands a fine view of the Rhine.

BRAZIL

SGI President Honored by Brazilian Art Academy

SGI President Ikeda was inaugurated as a nonresident member of the Brazilian cultural institute Ateneu Angrense of Literature and the Arts in a ceremony on Dec. 16, 1997, in Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro, where the academy is headquartered.

In her address, Academy President Regina Maura Rocha Pegorer expressed the academy's joy and honor in welcoming President Ikeda as a nonresident member, not only as the leader of a great organization, but as a poet whose work gives hope to the world's people. She also said that his work guides young people lost and searching for a way forward.

At the reception which followed, the best-selling Brazilian novelist Paulo Lins said that it was truly a privilege for the academy to have the SGI leader as a member, saying that he came to know of Mr. Ikeda's activities through his own work in the field of education. Beverly Maxwell Galloway, a British conductor and academy member who has lived and worked in Brazil for the past 30 years, asserted that President Ikeda deserves considerable recognition for inspiring youth. And Ednéa Paschoal, the academy's former president, hoped that the Brazilian institute would emulate Mr. Ikeda's example to work on the people's behalf.

— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*

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