

In 1994, SGI President Ikeda told members in Italy, 'If you stay home, you cannot accomplish kosen-rufu.' His words inspired 15 Italian members eventually to make their way to the United States. 'For us, this is not just visiting,' one member told new friends in San Francisco....

'We're Moving Our Lives!'

**By RON BAIRD
San Francisco Bureau Chief**

Fifteen members from Associazione Italiana-Soka Gakkai Internazionale (AI-SGI) arrived in San Francisco on Dec. 18, 1997, partly due to an invitation from local SGI-USA member David Frasca, who recently practiced in Italy. While in the Bay Area they stayed with local members and attended district meetings before proceeding to Los Angeles for a similar visit.

Many of the Italian members recall SGI President Ikeda's 1994 to Europe, and how he inspired them to have exchanges with other members around the world.

Several European countries have started kosen-rufu exchange meetings, including Austria and France.

Just as the SGI president has encouraged Japanese members to learn various languages and to move around the world, he has also encouraged the members in Italy.

According to Mario Guareschi, engineering general manager from Parma, when the SGI president visited Florence and Bologna, he told the members, "If you stay home, you cannot accomplish kosen-rufu."

Mario added: "He encouraged us to move, to share our experiences, and to break the language barrier. For instance if I visit your home and you come visit my home, our relationship will grow stronger. If you really get to know people from other countries, then you don't want to fight one another."

Mario continued: "For us, this is not just visiting. We're moving our lives! We did so much chanting for the success of this trip.

"We chanted for the protection of the flight and when we return we have arranged to make reports to the members. What we are doing is planting a seed. From our hearts, we say, 'Please come [to Italy].' It's not just words. When you come to Italy, you can spend several days in Parma, you can go to Florence, and to Milan or Rome. We are planning on welcoming all of you!"

WT

Title: We're Moving Our Lives!'

Subject: World Tribune 01/30/98 n.3176 p.8 WT980130p08

Author: Ron Baird

Keywords: Events Exchanges Features Lives Meetings Moving Special Were