

NEWSBRIEFS

SGI Joins 'Buddhism in America' Conference

The second annual "Buddhism in America" conference was held May 22–25 in San Diego. More than 300 participants of various Buddhist traditions gathered to discuss the future of Buddhism in America. Among the topics covered were: Buddhism in psychology and medicine, relationships, feminism, empowerment and socially engaged Buddhism.

Maria Guajardo Lucero, Ph.D., director of assets for Colorado Youth and an SGI-USA member from Denver, conducted a workshop titled "Cultural and Social Change in Action." Citing from the works of SGI President Ikeda and using various Buddhist principles as a framework for her talk, Ms. Lucero led the participants through various exercises that demonstrated how stereotypes are formed and broken down; the importance of listening during dialogue; and finding congruence between past, present and future in order to deepen understanding of oneself and others. Focusing on finding and appreciating value in diversity, Ms. Lucero also emphasized living with congruence between one's Buddhist practice and daily life.

— *NANCY SIMMS, Santa Monica, Calif.*

Mongolian President Visits Soka University

On May 14, President N. Bagabandi of the Republic of Mongolia visited Soka University in Hachioji, Tokyo, where he delivered a lecture to the faculty and students.

Mr. Bagabandi affirmed that exchanges in fields such as the sciences, arts and education have been pivotal in laying the foundations for the strong cooperative relationship that has developed between Mongolia and Japan in recent years. He particularly lauded Soka University and the Mongolian National University for their initiatives in this area. SGI President Ikeda, who is the founder of Soka University, he noted, received an honorary doctorate from the latter institute, the leading university in Mongolia.

The visiting head of state thanked the SGI leader for promoting Mongolian studies at the Tokyo school, and he stressed the vital importance of education to the future development and prosperity of Mongolia. In closing, President Bagabandi expressed confidence that the friendship and cooperation between Mongolia and Japan will continue to grow.

— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*

Ecology Exhibition Opens in Venezuela

The "Coexistence and Hope: The Amazon — Its Environment and Development" exhibition opened on May 14 in Caracas. This showing, the fifth in the exhibit's tour of Latin America, is one of the official events commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation (TCA).

The treaty was signed in 1978 by eight countries — Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela — to preserve the environment and promote the social and economic development of the Amazon region. The exhibition is being co-sponsored by the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the SGI and other agencies.

At the opening, attended by some 350 distinguished guests and Venezuelan officials, SGI-Venezuela General Director Ramón E. Regalado read a message sent by SGI President Ikeda. The SGI leader stated that the essence of the environmental issue lies in the actions people take based on their attitude to nature. The question is not so much whether to develop or protect the environment, he asserted, but whether there is a fundamental spirit to

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harmoniously coexist with nature. Mr. Ikeda went on to stress the significance of the exhibition, which introduces ways to ensure sustainable development based on the Buddhist philosophy of the sanctity of life.

— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*

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