

NEWSBRIEFS

Russia–Japan Society Honors SGI President

The Russia–Japan Society, headquartered in Moscow, has commended SGI President Ikeda for his efforts to strengthen friendship between the two countries. At a ceremony on June 5 marking its 40th anniversary, society president Viktor Zabelin presented the certificate of appreciation to Soka University President Kinnoyuke Komuro, who accepted on the SGI leader's behalf.

Mr. Komuro read a message from President Ikeda in which he stressed the importance of building lasting bonds of peace and also voiced his hope that a soft power diplomacy based on nongovernmental exchange would develop further.

The Russia-Japan Society has more than 60 branches throughout Russia actively working to develop educational, cultural and economic exchange with Japan. The Russia-Japan Society and the Soka Gakkai have been cooperating in exchange activities for more than two decades. Congratulatory messages were sent by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov.

— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*

Netherlands University Commends SGI President

The Peace Research Center of the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands conferred a Certificate of Commendation upon SGI President Ikeda in recognition of the SGI's efforts to increase awareness regarding peace and human rights. SGI of the Netherlands General Director Shozo Kotera and SGI of Europe Vice Chairperson Hideaki Takahashi received the certificate on Mr. Ikeda's behalf on June 3.

The Peace Research Center, established in 1965, has been a great supporter of the SGI-organized exhibition "Toward the Century of Humanity — Human Rights in Today's World," which was displayed in The Hague's city hall through June 13.

Dr. Leon Wecke, former director of the peace center, was among the officials on hand for the presentation. For the past four years Dr. Wecke has delivered a series of lectures on peace and human rights at seminars sponsored by the SGIN youth division, and he served as an advisor on the steering committee of The Hague showing of the SGI's human rights exhibition. He commented that peace cannot be achieved by means of politics and economics, but only through each individual fostering an indestructible conviction to realize it.

— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*

Australian Buddhists Hold Public Meeting

The fledgling Sunshine Coast District of fewer than 10 members in Queensland, Australia, held a public information meeting on April 18 at the beautiful Tandra Guesthouse in Flaxton — part of the scenic Blackall Mountain Range. It was a well-organized team effort that began with research into which of the local media would publish our news releases and provide space on their community notice boards.

More than 30 people attended the meeting, including General Director Hans van der Bent, who traveled from Sydney and responded to nearly an hour of questions.

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Much one-to-one discussion continued through almost an hour of refreshments. One result is that more than 20 persons continue to receive information about this Buddhism. Several are attending our weekly study groups. Three of them recently became members. We plan to hold another public information meeting in the future.

— ALICE TAYLOR, *Australia Correspondent*

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