

Hiromasa Ikeda Meets San Francisco Mayor
By JEFF FARR, Associate Editor
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*Willie Brown introduces a local school project based on ‘The Sun of ‘Jiyu,’”
SGI President Ikeda’s 1993 poem.*

In town for the opening of the SGI-co-sponsored Linus Pauling exhibition, SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda, son of the SGI president, and Linus Pauling Jr. met with San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown today. Mr. Ikeda and Dr. Pauling Jr. explained how the exhibit, five years in the making, came about, and Mayor Brown expressed his hope that many school children will see the exhibit and be inspired by the great example Linus Pauling set.

When Dr. Pauling Jr. told Mayor Brown how he had learned much from his father’s courage — the courage to even take on Congress at a time when most people caved in to political pressure — Brown also praised Linus Pauling as a man of independence.

Mayor Brown then informed Mr. Ikeda about a recent school project in the San Francisco Unified School District based on his father’s “Sun of *Jiyu*” poem. More than 30 children, 4th and 5th graders at Redding School, studied a portion of SGI President Ikeda’s poem on human diversity and wrote their own poem in response.

They then designed and painted tiles, self-portraits inspired by the excerpt, to decorate the facade of San Francisco’s new Tenderloin Community School. This is the first school to ever be built in the Tenderloin, one of San Francisco’s most disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Artist and SGI-USA member Martha Heavenston headed up the project, working with the school district, community members and the Bay Area Women’s and Children’s Center. She picked the portion of “The Sun of *Jiyu*” that the students studied, which, along with a world map, will be part of the Turk Street side of the school:

“There is no question that / your multiracial nation, America, / represents humanity’s future. / Your land holds secret stores / of unbounded possibility, transforming / the energy of different cultures / into the unity of construction, / the flames of conflict / into the light of solidarity, / the eroding rivulets of mistrust / into a great, broad flow of confidence.”

To her, this excerpt “seemed to exemplify the neighborhood. That neighborhood is exactly in that multiracial position. Exactly what President Ikeda is talking about is going on there.”

The poem the children wrote in response, “Room 9,” named after their classroom, will be on the school’s Van Ness Avenue side:

“Our school is / America. / We are many cultures. / Our minds, / Our hearts, / Our spirits, / Will shape the future, / Unstoppable!”

The Tenderloin Community School plans to welcome its first students later this month.

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