

**MEETINGS HELD IN TRINIDAD
AND IN ST. MAARTEN'S RAINBOW CHAPTER
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Some 70 St. Maarten members welcomed SGI North America Bureau Director Norimasa Saito to their general meeting on Dec. 11, 1999. It was the first visit ever made by an SGI leader to the island.

The meeting was held at the residence of Humphrey and Valerie Gitterson, who serve as leaders of St. Maarten's lone chapter, Rainbow Chapter. Their house has been used as the local community center for many years.

In his words, Mr. Saito, expressing his excitement over the fact he was able to visit St. Maarten on behalf of the SGI Headquarters, warmly encouraged those present in faith.

Some of the points made by Mr. Saito are as follows:

- The greatness of Buddhism manifests itself in human behavior. How we behave in our daily lives is the theme of Buddhism. In this regard, Nichiren Daishonin states, "The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 852). Human revolution means to polish our actions for others—our behavior as Buddhists—ceaselessly.

- SGI President Ikeda is a mentor of action, who is an expert at breaking through human barriers. Once he met at Soka University in Japan with a dignitary of the Soviet Union. Representative students present at this meeting observed the process in which President Ikeda created a friendship with this man. His bold, broad-minded and compassionate approach made an impression on the dignitary—to the point where their dialogue flowed so smoothly that a friendship was naturally established on the spot. This is just one example out of many such episodes that distinguishes President Ikeda's behavior as a Buddhist.

- Buddhism guides us to find solutions to our problems within us. Awakening ourselves to the absolute greatness that exists within is the first step to solving whatever problems we may have in life. As long as we try to find solutions outside ourselves, we will never be satisfied or happy. "I am an entity of happiness." "I am happiness itself." This awareness or conviction is the essence of Buddhism.

Before his visit to St. Maarten, Mr. Saito visited Trinidad, where he shared many similar points in faith with the members there. Another point he made there was that "fighting against evil forces within and without is the source of benefit and good fortune, as Nichiren Daishonin stresses in 'On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land.'"