

AROUND THE SGI

SGI-Brazil Holds National Entrance and Beginning Study Examinations

On July 30, more than 12,000 SGI-Brazil members took entrance- or beginning-level study department examinations on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism at 233 locations nationwide. The exam material concentrated on basic Buddhist terms and writings of Nichiren Daishonin. The entrance-level exam material included portions of: "The Opening of the Eyes," "On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime" and "Reply to Kyo'o"; the beginning-level exam material included portions of "On Practicing the Buddha's Teachings," "Letter to the Brothers" and "The True Aspect of All Phenomena." At the São Paulo exam site, SGI-Brazil General Director Eduardo K. Taguchi encouraged the examinees to challenge themselves to practice in their daily lives what they had learned.

Soka Gakkai Malaysia Opens New Center

On July 22, Soka Gakkai Malaysia (SGM) celebrated the opening of a new center in Seremban City, Negri Sembilan State. The three-story reinforced-steel, concrete building houses a meeting hall with a seating capacity of 330, and other smaller conference rooms and offices. SGI President Ikeda sent a congratulatory message with hopes that the center would become a training ground for fostering capable people for the sake of peace and prosperity in Malaysia in the 21st century. Also, on July 22 and 23, 1,200 representatives from throughout Malaysia converged on the SGM Culture Center in Jalan Cheras, Selangor, to celebrate SGM's 16th anniversary.

SGI-Italy General Director Speaks at Conference on Abolishing the Death Penalty in Assisi, Italy

On July 3–5, the Italian senate sponsored a "Conference on the Abolishment of the Death Penalty" with representatives from 10 European nations, in Assisi, Italy. Countries represented were: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain. Five NGOs, including Amnesty International and SGI-Italy, also sent representatives to observe the proceedings. Last year, SGI-Italy launched a petition against the death penalty and has collected 500,000 signatures to date. Speaking on behalf of the SGI, SGI-Italy General Director Mitsuhiro Kaneda affirmed the absolute dignity and sanctity of life upheld by the SGI, which follows the life-affirming philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. He stated that Buddhism does not condone the robbing of life by any government or individual. On July 4, SGI-Italy hosted an "Abolishing the Death Penalty" concert, sponsored by the Italian senate. The SGI-Italy members were lauded for their efforts to conduct one-on-one dialogue on the death penalty issue that culminated in the collection of 500,000 signatures.

SGI-Argentina Hosts Women's Seminar

On July 8, SGI-Argentina members hosted a women's human rights seminar at the SGI-

Title: Around the SGI

Subject: World Tribune 08/25/00 n.3308 p.2 WT000825p02

Author:

Keywords: Around International Tribune World

Argentina Peace Hall. Guest speakers included Amanda de Perez Esquivel, wife of 1980 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel, and Estela Carlotto, president of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a human rights organization that locates missing children taken from left-wing prisoners by the military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983. Argentina's First Lady Ines Pertine sent a congratulatory message. Approximately 2,000 women gathered to discuss human rights issues.

SGI Members in Togo, Nigeria and Ghana Hold General Meetings

On July 23, SGI members in Togo and Nigeria held general meetings in their respective areas. Approximately 2,300 members from throughout Ghana met at their center in Accra to exchange activity reports and experiences of the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. SGI-Ghana General Director Bobson M. Godonu and an SGI contingent from Japan, headed by SGI-Tokyo Africa Division Chief Kazuichi Namura, also attended the meeting in Ghana. Members from Benin, Burkina Faso (Upper Volta) and Senegal joined the SGI-Togo members at their gathering in Lome City. SGI President Daisaku Ikeda sent lengthy poems of encouragement to the Nigeria and Togo members. Music festivals filled with native costumes, dance and music were also held at each location.

Kingdom of Tonga Names Beach After SGI President

The Kingdom of Tonga recently named a part of its coastline "Daisaku Ikeda Beach." The area is in Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga located among the Tongatapu Islands. The honor recognizes SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's dedicated efforts for world peace. On July 5, King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV met with SGI representatives, headed by SGI Vice President and Soka University of America President Daniel Y. Habuki, and congratulated Mr. Ikeda for the honor. Tonga Vice Prime Minister and Education Minister S. Langi Kavaliku praised the SGI President for his contributions to peace, culture and education. A plaque engraved with verses by Mr. Ikeda was unveiled during a ceremony on the same day. The event was televised nationally on a news broadcast.

Courtesy of Seikyo Press