

## AROUND THE SGI

### **Ikeda–Hall Peace Garden Opens in Rotorua, New Zealand**

Ikeda–Hall Peace Garden, a park bearing the last names of SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and Mayor Grahame W. Hall, opened in Rotorua District, New Zealand on Sept. 8, in commemoration of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's "Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons" (Sept. 8, 1957) which condemned the use of nuclear weapons as criminal under any circumstances. Mr. Ikeda was recognized for his contributions to world peace. A "Peace Monument," engraved with words by first, second and third Soka Gakkai presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda and Mr. Ikeda, as well as Prime Minister Clark, Mayor Hall and Rotorua District Councilman Trevor Maxwell, was unveiled. President Ikeda sent a message read by SGI-Oceania Chair Richard Sasaki, in which President Ikeda expressed praise for Rotorua as the first city in New Zealand to declare a ban on nuclear weapons and his determination to continue his efforts for creating a network of peace in the world.

### **Institute of Oriental Philosophy Sponsors Panel Discussions in Canada**

Coinciding with the 36th International Congress of Asia and Northern Africa Studies (ICANAS) held from Aug. 27 through Sept. 2, 2000 at the Montreal Convention Centre (Palais des Congrès), the SGI-affiliated Institute of Oriental Philosophy of Hachioji City, Tokyo, held panel discussions on the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and its infusion in society. Two specific topics discussed were: "The Lotus Sutra and Global Issues" and "The Lotus Sutra: Past, Present and Future." Panelists, who included Buddhist scholars and human rights, peace, environment and medical experts, discussed applications of the Lotus Sutra in society in various regions of the world throughout the ages.

### **Soka University and University of Malay Sponsor 7th Pacific Basin Symposium in Malaysia**

From Aug. 28 through 30, the 7th Pacific Basin Symposium, titled "In Search of a New Asian Way," took place at the P.J. Hilton Hotel in the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Approximately 100 academics from 38 universities and 20 countries—including India, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, China, Laos, Mongolia, South Africa, the U.S.A. and Japan—met to discuss peace and security and development issues of the Pacific Rim area. SGI President Ikeda initiated the symposium as a response to the need for a think tank of scholars and intellectuals that would consider and offer solutions for Pacific Rim issues, such as rapid economic growth, the need to establish peaceful coexistence and ways to create cultural egalitarianism.

### **SGI's 'World Boys and Girls Art Exhibition' Opens in Panama**

On Aug. 17, the SGI's "World Boys and Girls Art Exhibition" opened at the Panama Culture Center, Panama City. Panama's First Vice President Arturo Vallarino and First Lady Ruby Moscoso de Young, Panama President Mireya Moscoso's younger sister, were the honored guests. The exhibit displays 300 paintings and drawings by children from 161 countries and regions, as well as 56 works by Panamanian children. The children's art exhibit was the first event following a cultural exchange agreement signed early this year between SGI-Panama and the Panamanian Cultural Agency. Under the Cultural

Agreement, SGI-Panama will contribute to the advancement of Panamanian culture and civilization through various cultural and performing arts programs.

### **Soka Ikeda College of Arts & Science for Women Opens in Chennai, India**

On Aug. 13, the Soka Ikeda College of Arts & Science for Women, part of the Madras University, officially opened in Chennai, India. College President Seth Bhaskaran presided over the opening, together with former Supreme Court Justice S. Mohan and former Vice-Chancellor of Madras University, Dr. S. Lakshmi. Dr. Padmasani Kannan is the college principal, and Dr. Sethu Kumanan, chairman. Construction for the women's college campus, officially recognized by Tamil Nadu state, begins shortly, and is scheduled to be completed in 2001. Until then, classes will be held at the Sethu Baskara School in Chennai. Guests attending the opening included: World Poetry Society President and founder Krishna Srinivas; Gandhi Smriti & Dharshan Samiti Director N. Radhakrishnan; Bharat Soka Gakkai Vice Secretary-General Akash K. Ouchi; Bharat Soka Gakkai Deputy Chief Secretary Hardyal Sharma; retired C.I.D. Special Officer V. Ramanathan; President of the Aarch City Rotary Club in Chennai, S. Mani; and faculty members.

### **SGI Delegation Pays Courtesy Call on New Mongolian Prime Minister**

On Aug. 12, an SGI delegation, to Mongolia, headed by Soka Gakkai Vice President Toshiyuki Mitsugi, paid a courtesy call on newly elected Mongolian Prime Minister Nambaryn Enkhbayar at the government office building in Ulaanbaator. Upon being handed a personal letter from SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, Mr. Enkhbayar fondly recalled meeting President Ikeda in 1993 in Tokyo, when he was the country's Culture Minister. He told the delegates that he looks forward to President Ikeda visiting Mongolia in the near future. He also expressed his gratitude to the SGI for providing emergency aid to Mongolia earlier this year in the wake of severe blizzards on the Mongolian steppes which destroyed 2 million livestock and the livelihood of 48 percent of the Mongolian people.

### **Venustiano Carranza House of Culture, Mexico, Commends SGI-Mexico**

On July 12, Coordinator Manuel Santamaria Samartín of the Venustiano Carranza House of Culture, Mexico, presented a certificate of appreciation to SGI-Mexico for sponsoring a peace forum titled, "A Human Revolution for Peace: The People are the Protagonists in Their Own Lives" on July 6 and 7. The Venustiano Carranza House of Culture was established to honor Venustiano Carranza (1859–1920), a protagonist of the Mexican revolution, who enacted the Mexican Constitution of 1917 as president, before his assassination in 1920. The forum took place at the Venustiano Carranza House of Culture.

*Courtesy of SOKANET  
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